

THE MISSION OF THE *Immaculata*

E-PUBLICATION OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA, USA



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80TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. MAXIMILIAN'S MARTYRDOM

Savoring Good Things

By John W. Galten, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! As you receive this newsletter, we find ourselves right in the middle of the holiest week of the year! Let us all be accompanied by the Immaculata attending and entering into the Mystery of Jesus' suffering, death and Resurrection.

In the March issue, there was much to "lay hold of" and make our own. Let me, for emphasis, mention just a few things. First, reading MI International President Miquel Bordas Proszynski's letter about the 80th Anniversary Year of St. Maximilian's martyrdom. Read it over twice with a pencil in hand, noting the main points and what the Spirit says to you; also U.S. MI Vice President Michael Wick's article on the family, the Immaculata, St. Joseph and Jesus, the holiest of families wants to be a part of yours, as model but also as guests. Read carefully as well our own MI initiative—the reading of Patricia Treecé's book "A Man for Others". This is our suggestion for living the Kolbean anniversary year. I am reading it and being dazzled by the Saint's life and virtues. May we all be inspired to imitate him! How can you know how to imitate and love him more if you don't read his life and come to contact with him?

Lastly, from the writing of St. Maximilian (KW 97), he says, "We must fight with prayer, good example, and cordiality, with great gentleness and kindness, as a reflection of the Immaculata's goodness." This quote alone is worth the entire issue of the newsletter. Let us take up this challenge and exhortation by our patron saint by: praying over it, asking for these gifts, and embodying the virtues—the true sign that we are living our Total Consecration.

Until next month, "Arise, let us be on our way." *Alleluia, He is Risen!*

John W. Galten



"Through Mary Immaculate to Jesus: that is our watchword. The more you spread veneration and love for the Immaculata the more souls you win over to her, and, through her, to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, who loved us unto death on the Cross."

– St. Maximilian Kolbe

MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA

PILGRIMAGE ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE AUGUST 13-15



OUR LADY OF GOOD HELP PILGRIMAGE

**Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe
August 13**

**Basilica of St. Josaphat
August 14**

**Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help
August 15**

Join us for a driving pilgrimage beginning at Marytown on Friday afternoon and concluding with a Mass at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help. We provide daily Mass, daily Rosary, Presentations on St. Maximilian Kolbe's Martyrdom, Franciscans devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Message and Miracles of Our Lady of Good Help. We provide accommodations at Marytown and at Manitowoc with some meals. You provide your own transportation. Cost \$400.

Contact the MI Spiritual Assistant, Fr. Thomas Czek, OFM Conv. at Email: casakolbe41@gmail.com or (510) 537-0806



Year of St. Joseph

As we observe this special year dedicated to St. Joseph, we are encouraged to imitate his unconditional fidelity to God and to ask his powerful intercession. The following prayer might be useful:

Joseph, strong and gentle saint, dear to God and His faithful shadow, remember me in all my spiritual and material needs. Be my advocate before the Father. To you I bring my heart and soul and all my longings. Sanctify them with your burning faith, your unfaltering hope, and with that great, self-sacrificing love that was the secret of your hidden sanctity. Christ was your peace: give Him to my heart, then by His light I will see the way that I must walk to stay with Him. Give me the courage not to turn back because of darkness, sorrow, or sufferings. Teach me the joy of loving God's Will, and help me to live, as you have done, within its calm and peaceful depths. Amen.



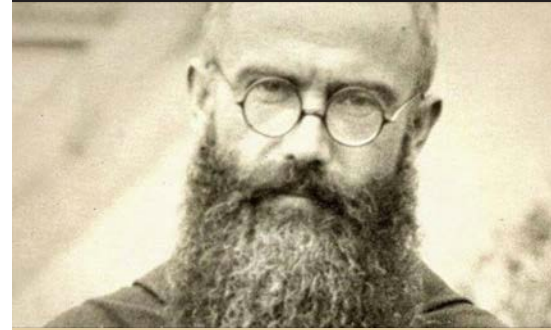
Daily Holy Mass

will be offered throughout 2021 for the MI-USA and all MI Members, living and deceased, at the City of the Immaculata established by St. Maximilian Kolbe near Warsaw, in Poland.

Send your prayer intentions to be placed in the MI Book of Intentions at the feet of Our Lady and St. Maximilian Kolbe's first class relic:

PrayerRequest@MissionImmaculata.com

See and Share the MI Film!



This important short film beautifully and eloquently captures the essence of the MI: total consecration to the Immaculata in the evangelical spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

"Simply excellent!"
"Inspirational!"

Share the link <http://militiaoftheimmaculata.com/mi-movie/> with your family and friends and promote the new film by posting on your favorite social media platform!

Let's reach as many people as possible to win the world for Christ through the Immaculata!





The Cross: God's Sign of Love

A Homily by Fr. Pio Maria, C.F.R., M.I.

There is a lot we can say about the Cross. Paul says the Cross is God's wisdom and God's strength. Our Holy Father St. Francis compares the Cross to a throne – “the Lord has reigned from the wood of a tree.” Above all things, the Cross is a sign of love. Primarily, above all things, this should be an overwhelming reminder for us that we are loved.

The Cross is the sign of “God so lov[ing] the world.” It's an extreme love, and it's amazing. To redeem us, this extent of love was totally unnecessary. It's not necessary to suffer so much for our salvation. Just going on justice, having become incarnate and making one perfect human action in reparation could have been enough. That's justice. But God wants to give us a sign not of justice, but of extravagant, unnecessary love. “God so loved the world...” It's a sign of Him “so lov[ing].” We also see 1 John, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but

that he loved us and sent his Son.” Also from 1 John, “God showed his love in this: that while we were sinners, Christ died for us.” Sometimes we can look at the Cross and feel ashamed, but that's not what it's supposed to do. It's, “Look how far I will go to show you that I'm committed to you.” It's supposed to be a sign of the Good Shepherd who does not abandon us. The Good Shepherd finds the sheep that is all caught up with thorns. It's a sign of holiness which is not scared of sin, and goes into our abandonment. It is a sign that in our loneliness, Communion seeks us. In our darkness, the Light comes down for us. St. Bonaventure has this beautiful line: “Look at the Cross. Jesus says, ‘My feet are nailed so that you see I will never walk away from you. My arms are nailed wide so that you see I am always ready to embrace you. My head is bowed low to always offer you the kiss of peace, and my heart has been pierced so that you know my heart is always open to you.’” That is the sign of the Cross.

We need the Cross. Fr. Benedict [Groeschel, C.F.R.], would say, “I've never experienced the resurrection. But I've been crucified in my life many, many times.” It is such a good sign that in our crucifixions, in our sufferings, God knows. God can do something great with these things. God will use them. We hear in the Preface for the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross that God comes like a new Adam. The Preface says, “You placed the salvation of the world on the wood of the Cross, so that where death arose, life might again spring forth, and the evil one who conquered us from a tree would likewise from a tree be conquered.” So there is this new Adam, new Eve idea.... But also the idea that he comes after us. It is a sign that he is “so loving.” It is a sign, a reminder that we are that lovable.

The second thing I want to say is that he takes our sufferings and he

makes them good. Paul Claudel says, “God did not come to take away suffering, but to fill suffering with a presence.” So we have this beautiful theology that, in our sufferings, God gives us the power in the world that we can use to save souls. Just as He saves us through suffering, in our suffering He gives the baptized the power to save others. We become, co-redeemers, co-operators, co-saviors. In Colossians 1:24, Paul says, “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.” I can rejoice in my sufferings because I am filling up what is lacking... On one level, there is nothing that is lacking in Christ's Cross. *But...* he has left something for us to fill up. There's a share of suffering in all of our lives that can be offered and joined to His. Some people are not bearing it well and so, with our sufferings, we can help them. “I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church.”

In *Salvifici Doloris*, “Saving Sufferings,” or “Salvific Sufferings,” Saint John Paul II has left us some great, beautiful insights. It's a little bit heavy, but I'll try to make it simple.... In that letter, he says that all of our sufferings have been “redeemed.”

Our sufferings have already been redeemed. Here's what I mean by that. When Our Lord assumed a human nature, He personally united Himself with every human. At the Incarnation, Jesus assumes a human nature, and joins to Himself every human, from Adam to the last one. He joins all of our human lives to Himself, and He offers them in our name at the Cross. At the Cross, Jesus has already offered every part of human life.

At the Cross, as High Priest of humanity, Jesus has already offered human life to the Father – all that makes

(continues on pg. 4)



The Cross: God's Sign of Love

(continued from pg. 3)

man life to the Father – all that makes up human life, including all human frustrations and sufferings. All of the human experience, he has already offered at the Cross. So, John Paul II says that our sufferings were redeemed already when He offered Himself. And now we have in ourselves sufferings that have already been redeemed, sufferings that we can use to share in Jesus' redemptive work. He says that each of us in our sufferings preserves a particle of the power of Christ's redemption. Here's the quote:

“In the Cross of Christ, not only is the redemption accomplished through suffering, but also human suffering itself has been redeemed. In bringing about the redemption through suffering, Christ has also raised human suffering to the level of redemption. Thus each man in his suffering can also become a sharer in the redemptive suffering of Christ. Those who share in the sufferings of Christ preserve in their own sufferings a very special particle of the infinite treasure of the world's redemption. We can share this treasure with others.”

So awesome!

This is an answer to the feelings of futility and helplessness that many

have. When some people start to lose their ability to be “productive in society,” when the elderly feel lonely and abandoned, they (and all of us!) always have at their disposal a way to cooperate in the most effective way possible in the world's redemption. We don't like suffering, but we can use it. We can use it. Thanks be to God.

Those are the two things for today:

1) The Cross is, above all, a sign of love, an unnecessary extravagant gesture. “I don't have to go this far, but I want you to see how far I will go to never lose you. I will always be with you, and I will follow you everywhere, and even your darkest darkness is not dark with me. And I will make suffering a new tree of life.”

2) And “I will let you share in my sufferings. And in your sufferings, you can save others as well.”

So let us today join our sufferings to the love of Jesus on this altar as we offer our lives and our prayers to Him.

Fr. Pio Maria, C.F. R., M.I.

(Homily given at the Poor Clare Monastery in Roswell, New Mexico, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross 2020)

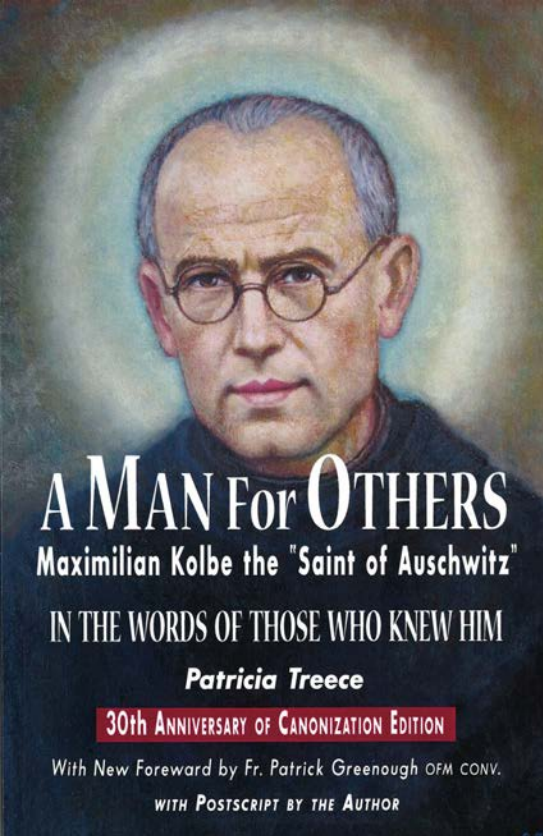
Have you considered becoming a Knight at the Foot of the Cross or inviting someone you know to do so?

THE KNIGHTS AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS

Let Our Lady Lead You to Make Your Suffering Fruitful!

MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA

Request the brochure from the MI National Office.



A Man for Others A Study Guide

The year 2021 has been declared by the MI International Council as the Celebration of the 80th Anniversary of St. Maximilian's Martyrdom at Auschwitz, August 14, 1941. The MI throughout the world is being asked to hold events to call to mind the martyrdom that shook the world. In the history of the Church, the martyr St. Kolbe is honored precisely for the virtue of charity, not the usual virtue of faith. He is truly the counter sign to the culture of death, as Pope St. John Paul II said of him: he is the Prophet of the Civilization of Love.

The MI-USA is calling all Knights to recognize this heroic act by reading/studying the book *A Man for Others* by Patricia Treece, a beautiful and sensitive introduction to the Saint's life through the words of those who knew him. This book can be ordered through the Marytown Bookstore. MI member may receive a 20% discount when ordering it online with the code MI2021.

Please order the book and follow along with your fellow Knights by using the study questions that are listed below and that will appear in the newsletter until August 14, 2021. What a wonderful way to honor the Saint and come to know better his remarkable life, teachings and death. **To prepare, read pages 53-92.**

1. **Chapter 5:** St. Maximilian leads a small band of Franciscans to Japan to begin the work of the MI.

How does this mission and its struggles exemplify the virtue of faith?

What does it tell us about our struggle in the apostolate of spreading total consecration?

What virtue do you note in St. Kolbe and his friar companions?

How does it inspire you?

2. **Chapter 6:** Poland 1936-1939. The Saint returns to Poland after planting the beginning of a worldwide movement. Note how the Immaculata blessed the City of the Immaculata with extraordinary numbers of Franciscans and the genius of its organization and inventiveness.

How does St. Maximilian use technology to spread the Gospel?

What does that tell us? How did he blend spirituality and practical apostolic work?

What does this tell us about trust in the Immaculata?

Kolbe says that to say someone is a religious (that is, a member of a religious order) should be a synonym for saint. Allow me to paraphrase his words: To say that someone is a Knight of the Immaculata should be a synonym for saint. What do you think of that?

John W. Galten

Invite Friends to Be Consecrated to Our Lady!



Behold Your Mother! The Path to Total Consecration to Our Lady in the Spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe

This beautiful 56-page booklet may be used individually or as a group activity (in a home or parish setting, for example), or as a series of classes led by a facilitator, or during a day of preparation for MI consecration to Our Lady. If you can offer a series of meetings, you can read each chapter with the group and invite the participants to reflect and comment on it. Alternatively, you can invite them to read each chapter beforehand and come together for discussion.

Many people have expressed the desire to promote total consecration to Mary in their parish and local area. *The Path to Total Consecration* offers you an effective tool for making that possible!

Now available in audio book form.

The suggested donation for multiple copies of the booklet is \$1.00/ea. plus shipping; for a single copy, the suggested donation is \$3.75 shipping included.



Order copies of both today from the MI National Office:
MINational@MissionImmaculata.com
Or call: 331-223-5564



What about Our Lady during Holy Week and Eastertide?

A simple reminder of our Mother's vital presence during this holy time of the year.

Providentially, this year the start of the month of April coincides with the Easter Triduum of the Lord's Passion, death and Resurrection, and the extended celebration of this glorious Mystery during the following 50 days of Eastertide. Where do we find Our Lady during the events that mark these holy days and throughout the Easter season...? *Everywhere!*

When the Lord celebrated the Last Supper and established the new and eternal covenant, when He consummated His sacrifice on Calvary, we are reminded that the Body and Blood He offers for us as His Mother "stood" at the foot the Cross is the same Body and Blood He received when He became incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Annunciation.

St. John Paul II beautifully wrote, "What must Mary have felt as she heard from the mouth of Peter, John, James and the other Apostles the words spoken at the Last Supper: 'This is my body which is given for you' (Lk 22:19)? The body given up for us and made present under sacramental signs was the same body which she had conceived in her womb! For Mary, receiving the Eucharist must have somehow meant welcoming once more into her womb that heart which had beat in unison with hers and reliving what she

had experienced at the foot of the Cross. 'Do this in remembrance of me' (Lk 22:19)" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 56).

What the Pope added has a unique significance for us: "In the 'memorial' of Calvary, all that Christ accomplished by His passion and His death is present. Consequently, *all that Christ did with regard to His Mother* for our sake is also present. To her He gave the beloved disciple and, in him, each of us: 'Behold, your Son!' To each of us He also says: 'Behold your mother!' (cf. Jn 19: 26-27) *Experiencing the memorial of Christ's death in the Eucharist also means continually receiving this gift. It means accepting – like John – the one who is given to us anew as our Mother. It also means taking on a commitment to be conformed to Christ, putting ourselves at the school of his Mother and allowing her to accompany us* [emphasis added]. Mary is present, with the Church and as the Mother of the Church, at each of our celebrations of the Eucharist" (*Ibid.*, 57).

No matter when we made our personal consecration to Our Lady, it would be most fitting to rekindle our grateful receiving of the Lord's gift – His Mother – by renewing our consecration to her on Good Friday (in fact, at every Mass, when we stand again at the foot of the Cross, sacramentally).

With her, then, we shall wait in hope for His Resurrection in the silence of Holy Saturday, so as to be ready to recognize Him at the Eucharistic banquet in the Night brighter than day of the Easter Vigil.

Not only that! Our Lady is our Eastertide companion. Our Immaculate Mother lived out that *new divine life* that her Son won for each us by his Passion, Death and Resurrection in the day-to-day unfolding of her existence.

Her very life mirrors the Beatitudes He proclaimed and the receptivity and docility to the working of the Holy Spirit that make them possible. She is the one whom Jesus could point out as the authentic personification of what He meant when He said, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him" (Jn 14:23).

When she was in the midst of the first disciples, persevering in prayer and waiting for the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:14), she was before them a living mirror of Jesus her Son and Lord. She still is, especially as we strive to live our total consecration to her.

Our Immaculate Mother is for us today, as she has been throughout the centuries, the luminous exemplar of our *new life in Christ as sons and daughters of God*, that new life which makes us light of the world and salt of the earth. She accompanies us, encourages us, and intercedes for us. Let us walk with her during the Easter Season toward Pentecost.

St. Maximilian urges us: "*Stay often with the Immaculata, converse with her often, linger one on one with her often, and you shall become more and more like her*" (KW 1367).

As we look at his life we know we can trust his advice. Our Lady of Eastertide, pray with us and for us!

Antonella Di Piazza, FKMI

MI

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



St. Max and His Friends

Before the final arrest on February 17, 1941, shortly after the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, St. Maximilian and other Franciscans had been arrested and remained prisoners in the internment camps of Lamsdorf, Amtitz and Ostrzeszow. They were set free on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1939.

During their imprisonment, St. Maximilian continued to be an example of faith and genuine charity for his fellow prisoners, and for the Germans who ran the camps. But **where he asked others to walk, Kolbe always led himself.** Bro. Rufinus Majdan recalled a day when Father Maximilian distributed his entire daily ration to others. Brother Juventyn says whenever Father Maximilian noticed a Brother suffering from hunger, he shared his bread with him. And Brother Jerome's reminiscences note that when Father Maximilian received a box of cheese for himself from the camp kitchen, **he insisted on sharing it with them all.** Jerome's portrait of his spiritual father:

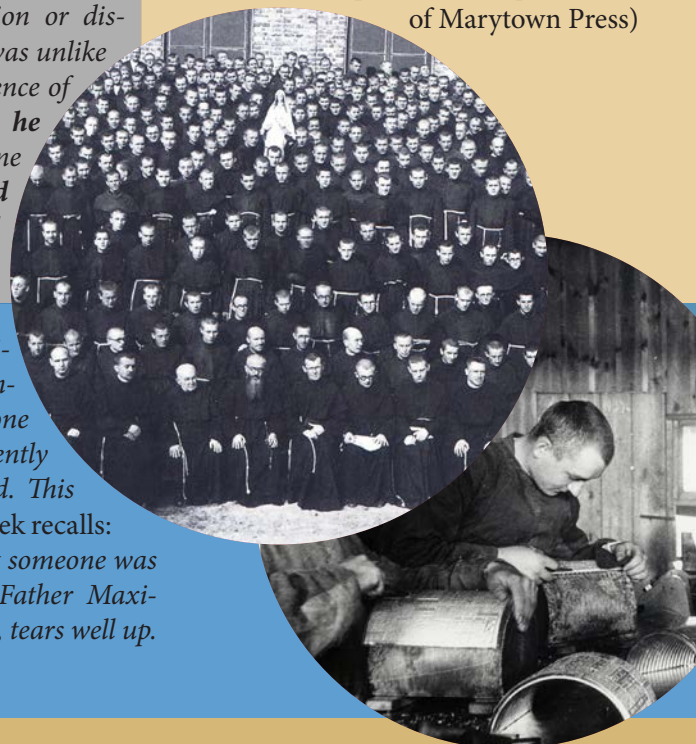
*He was totally enamored of God. When in the camp we suffered hunger, cold, and when we slept on the ground or on hay under tents—and it was already a snowy and icy November—and we had no water to drink, and while we hadn't changed our underwear for three months, and while the insects and filth tormented us, **Father Maximilian bore it all with joy.** It was a way, he felt, he could show his love for God. It was at this time that I wrote down his statement that a certain sadness pervades even fervent souls when they realize that in heaven they will no longer be able to show God their love by suffering for Him. Brother Pelagius made note of another remark: The man who avoids suffering doesn't know what happiness is.*

*I also recall from his talks that he longed to die and be united to God. In the camp we couldn't have Mass, but even there I recalled how, when he received Communion or distributed it to us, the holiness and union with God that showed in his face was unlike that of any priest I have ever known. He kept trying to teach us that the essence of sanctity consists of our will being one with the will of God. For that reason, **he advised us before we acted to ask the Virgin Mary**—whose will is always one with God's—**what she would do in the situation and to then proceed as our conscience directed.** He prayed a lot with us, gave conferences, and organized spiritual retreats.*

*With us, he also organized services in which the lay prisoners participated and he heard their confessions. He took the entire experience of imprisonment with serenity and submission to God's will. There was only one thing about him that annoyed me: he seemed to repeat too often and too insistently that we would be freed soon and that the Immaculata's help would be involved. This irritated me. For others, **his remarks strengthened their hope.** Brother Juraszek recalls: For a while I slept by him. I awoke during the night once, suddenly aware that someone was very gently tucking in my feet. I opened my eyes—and what did I see? It was Father Maximilian who was covering my feet so tenderly. Every time I recall this incident, tears well up. He seemed to me then as infinitely good and tender as the best mother.*

Brother Juventyn remembers a special occasion: *On the evening of October 12, Father Maximilian's feast day, after the lay people went to bed, we gathered at the entrance of the tent. But on that evening he was walking outdoors and praying longer than usual. When he finally came in we surrounded him, singing the traditional Plurimos annos. Father Maximilian, looking at all of us with love, said tenderly, "My dear sons, I was thinking of what I can give you for my feast day. I have nothing. But let me share with you my wish that you entrust yourselves more completely to the Immaculata. In the midst of today's trials, let's submit ourselves to the will of God. When suffering is remote, we're willing to do anything. Now that it's here, let's accept it and bear it willingly to gain as many souls as possible...."* Words, however, were inadequate to express his love. So he broke the piece of bread he had and shared it with all of us....

(Excerpts from *A Man for Others*, by Patricia Treece. Reprinted with permission of Marytown Press)



Reflection on April MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that the joy of the Risen Lord may fill our hearts and enable us to transmit His love.

“Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples.” (Mt 28:8)*

The Lord Jesus Christ became man out of love for us, walked on this earth and experienced our human condition step after step. In His Sacred Humanity, He lived every reality of our human existence. He did want to become like us in all things, except sin. During this amazing journey, He showed us how to live and to love. The legacy He left us is in fact His own way of life: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12). The Cross is the ultimate word by which He proclaimed this love that overcomes sin and death. In the Risen Lord the path to eternal life and immortality, to which God has predestined us from all eternity, is definitively open for us. Jesus lives on in us and continues His victory over sin and death in us if we respond to His Grace, given to us in Baptism and through the other Sacraments. We carry this unfathomable treasure in our earthen vessels: the very life of Jesus Christ Our Risen Lord.

The Militia of the Immaculata has one great ideal: the conversion and sanctification of all hearts, through prayer, witness and works of evangelization. Lived with joy and dedication in a variety of ways, our total consecration is in fact a new manner of belonging totally to God, in union with Jesus, through the Blessed Virgin Mary. After the founding of the MI, St. Maximilian wrote: “Our main aim is always the conversion and sanctification of souls, that is, winning them over to the Immaculata and the love of every soul” (KW 631).

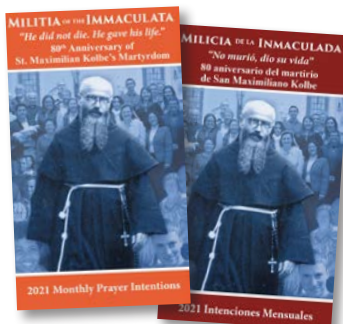
It is wonderful to see how Fr. Kolbe identifies the apostolic goal of the MI with the mission of the Immaculata herself: “The aim of the Militia of the Immaculata is the goal of the Immaculata herself. She,

in fact, as Co-redemptrix, desires to extend to all humanity the fruits of the redemption brought about by her Son; she does all she can to win [all souls] for Christ. The single desire of the Immaculata is to raise the level of our spiritual life to the summits of holiness” (KW 1220).

Moreover, in the same article he emphasized that our total consecration to the Immaculata calls us to dedicate ourselves to the apostolate: “The Immaculata does not intend to realize these projects of apostolic action directly, personally. Rather, she seeks to involve us in this activity” (Ibid.). Our Lady is the Mother of Jesus and ours. She wants to see her children joy-filled, as the women who went to the tomb, early in the morning, then ran with great joy to give the news of the Resurrection to the Apostles (cf. Mt 28:8). St. Maximilian tells us “The source of happiness and peace is not outside, but within us. Let us learn how to profit from everything in order to exercise our souls in patience, humility, obedience, poverty, and the other virtues...” (KW 935).

MI Knights are to evangelize with joy and enthusiasm. We are to walk, fight, resist and face daily crosses with the strength of Jesus Christ. Let us be the aroma of the risen Lord wherever we go (cf. 2 Cor2:15).

Fr. Sebastiano B. Quaglio, OFM Conv.



**2021 MI Intentions leaflets
are available in English and Spanish.**

**Request them from
the MI National Office.**

Act of Total Consecration to the Immaculata

(Prayer composed by St. Maximilian Kolbe)

O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to you. I, (name), a repentant sinner, cast myself at your feet humbly imploring you to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to yourself as your possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death and eternity, whatever most pleases you.

If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: “She will crush your head,” and, “You alone have destroyed all heresies in the world.”

Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed Kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever you enter, you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

V. Allow me to praise you, O sacred Virgin.

R. Give me strength against your enemies.



St. Joseph through the Eyes of Ven. Fulton Sheen

He had a remarkable devotion to Our Lady and perhaps it comes as no surprise that he would have such an insight into her holy spouse.

Was he [St. Joseph] old or young? Most of the statues and pictures we see of Joseph today represent him as an old man with a gray beard, one who took Mary and her vow under his protection with somewhat the same detachment as a doctor would pick up a baby girl in a nursery. We have, of course, no historical evidence whatsoever concerning the age of Joseph. Some apocryphal accounts picture him as an old man; Fathers of the Church, after the fourth century, followed this legend rather rigidly. ...

But when one searches for the reasons why Christian art should have pictured Joseph as aged, we discover that it was in order better to safeguard the virginity of Mary. Somehow, the assumption had crept in that senility was a better protector of virginity than adolescence. Art thus uncon-

sciously made Joseph a spouse chaste and pure by age rather than by virtue. But this is like assuming that the best way to show that a man would never steal is to picture him without hands. ...

But more than that, to make Joseph out as old portrays for us a man who had little vital energy left, rather than one who, having it, kept it in chains for God's sake and for his holy purposes. To make Joseph appear pure only because his flesh had aged is like glorifying a mountain stream that has dried. The Church will not ordain a man to his priesthood who has not his vital powers. She wants men who have something to tame, rather than those who are tame because they have no energy to be wild. It should be no different with God.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to believe that Our Lord would prefer, for a foster father, someone who had made a sacrifice rather than someone who was forced to it. There is the added historical fact that the Jews frowned on a disproportionate marriage between what Shakespeare called "crabbed age and youth"; the Talmud admits a disproportionate marriage only for widows or widowers. Finally, it seems hardly possible that God would have attached a young mother, probably about sixteen or seventeen years of age, to an old man. If He did not disdain to give His mother to a young man, John, at the foot of the Cross, then why should He have given her an old man at the crib? A woman's love always determines the way a man loves: She is the silent educator of his virile powers.

Since Mary is what might be called a "virginizer" of young men as well as women, and the greatest inspiration of Christian purity, should she not logically have begun by inspiring and virginizing the first youth whom she had probably ever met — Joseph, the Just? It was not by diminishing his power to love but by elevating it that she would have her first conquest, and in her own spouse, the man who was a man, and not a mere senile watchman!

Joseph was probably a young man, strong, virile, athletic, handsome, chaste

and disciplined. Instead of being a man incapable of loving, he must have been on fire with love. Just as we would give very little credit to the Blessed Mother if she had taken her vow of virginity after having been an old maid for fifty years, so neither could we give much credit to a Joseph who became her spouse because he was advanced in years. Young girls in those days, like Mary, took vows to love God uniquely, and so did young men, of whom Joseph was one so preeminent as to be called the "just." Instead, then, of being dried fruit to be served on the table of the king, he was rather a blossom filled with promise and power. He was not in the evening of life, but in its morning, bubbling over with energy, strength and controlled passion. Mary and Joseph brought to their espousals not only their vows of virginity but also two hearts with greater torrents of love than had ever before coursed through human breasts. ...

How much more beautiful Mary and Joseph become when we see in their lives what might be called the first Divine Romance! No human heart is moved by the love of the old for the young; but who is not moved by the love of the young for the young? In both Mary and Joseph, there were youth, beauty and promise. God loves cascading cataracts and bellowing waterfalls, but he loves them better, not when they overflow and drown his flowers, but when they are harnessed and bridled to light a city and to slake the thirst of a child.

In Joseph and Mary, we do not find one controlled waterfall and one dried-up lake but rather two youths who, before they knew the beauty of the one and the handsome strength of the other, willed to surrender these things for Jesus. Leaning over the manger crib of the Infant Jesus, then, are not age and youth but youth and youth, the consecration of beauty in a maid and the surrender of strong comeliness in a man.

(Excerpt from Archbishop Fulton Sheen's *The World's First Love: Mary, Mother of God*)



St. Maximilian Writes...

In 1927, while in Zakopane, Fr. Maximilian wrote this letter to the students of the Teachers College in Wirow (KW 164).

Dear Fellow Knights in the Immaculata!

I received your letter and although at the present moment I am not taking care of either the Militia of the Immaculata or *Rycerz*, as I am undergoing a course of treatment for my health, I am, however, responding with a few words and at the same time, will send your letter to Grodno to Fr. Alfons, who is replacing me there, so that he is aware of it and may deposit it in the archives of the Militia.

The Immaculata has listened with satisfaction to your resolutions. She has inspired you, and she will help you to put them into practice. In a congress the Freemasons decreed: "We can defeat the Catholic religion not with reasoning, but solely by perverting morals." What an astute judgment!...

The first part testifies to the truth of the Catholic religion, because only truth cannot be defeated by reason; indeed, it becomes all the more resplendent. In the second part, instead, they capture the really weak point, because for the person immersed in the mud of immorality, religion becomes some-

thing inconvenient; he does not want to think of it and proclaims everywhere that he does not believe in God, as if someone had already demonstrated that God does not exist.

For him, God is too inconvenient, because for him it is inconceivable that there could be a greater happiness, the only one that can fill and fulfill the great soul of man.

Years ago, St. Paul wrote: "The man who does not believe does not understand" [cf. Ps 92:7] and Jesus Himself taught: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God" [Mt 5:8]—obviously in this world—with the eyes of faith. Wise, therefore, was that judgment, and, in accordance with it, they began to deliberately and methodically corrupt literature, art, theater, cinema, fashion, etc. And if customs left much to be desired before, the immorality that poured with arrogance now from all possible sources, invaded our cities and even the villages, dragging with it the weakening of faith, according to the accurate foresight of that resolution. The Immaculata—of whom it was said, "She will crush your head"

[cf. Gn 3:15], namely of the infernal serpent—[she] will crush this head too, Freemasonry, which directs this antireligious and immoral movement and provides great amounts of money for the development of new sects.

Let us devote ourselves totally to the Immaculata, so that she may wish to use us as her tools to save and sanctify souls. Let us conquer hearts for her, because wherever she goes, there penetrates divine grace, and so salvation and sanctification follow.

I entrust you to the protection of the Immaculata. I ask you for a prayer.

Fr. Maximilian

A Miraculous Medal Story

Two MI members, after extended prayer and discernment, undertook an amazing initiative: the mailing of a Miraculous Medal to each member of Congress: 535 people. Each Medal was accompanied by the illustrative brochure, and much more prayer.

As they completed their enterprise, they simply said: *We leave all in Our Lady's hands for wherever she enters, she obtains the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through her hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.*

Let us accompany their effort with our prayer! May it bear much fruit!



Fr. Maximilian M. Kolbe

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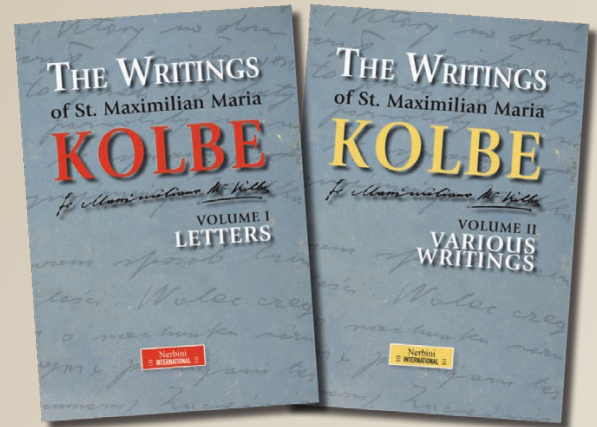
331-223-5564 or via email: MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

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"If you love the Immaculata, if your heart burns with gratitude to her, offer your contribution to this work, according to your capabilities! It is worth making such an effort! The Immaculata will not forget it! May all MI Knights be zealous in winning the world over to the Immaculata!"
St. Maximilian Kolbe