

# THE MISSION OF THE *Immaculata*

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## Advent with Mary

By John W. Galten, MI National President

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! I shall take a small break from my series on the roots of St. Maximilian's person and spiritual personality. It is, after all, the liturgical season of Advent and the wonderful feast of Christmas approaches.

As we begin the new liturgical year, it is fitting to pause and think about a new beginning. The Church places us historically in the world waiting, while living in the shadow of death, for the Savior, the One who will deliver us from the legacy of sin and death. With Mary, we, with the old Testament people ask, "How can this be?" and "Who will deliver us?"

In the beginning of the month, we have the great Marian feasts of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th and Our Lady of Guadalupe on December 12th. How appropriate that in the fullness of time God answers our questions with her. Our own movement celebrates, if you will, our own "birthday" as a movement on the Feast of the Mary's own Immaculate Conception, while we anticipate our deliverance in the birth of her Son, the Son of the living God. We, as MI Knights, can with Mary then prepare for the birth of the New Creation in Him. She does and will accompany us on the spiritual journey to the crib, the crib so dear to St. Francis of Assisi who tenderly initiated the celebration of Christmas in living re-enactments.

We must not allow the commercialization of Christmas to diminish in our hearts the vital and essential truth that Christmas is about the New Creation in the Woman and her Child. One of the Advent liturgies has this simple, beautiful truth: "Mary conceived Him in her heart before His birth," and "She carried Him beneath her heart with love beyond all telling."

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*"The goal of the MI (the abbreviation comes from the Latin Militia Immaculatae, or Militia of the Immaculata) is, in fact, to make sure that all become saints. In all this activity, what strikes the eye most of all is its Marian thrust. This is a consequence of a precise understanding of the mission of the Immaculata."  
(KW 1220)*

## Editorial

(continued from pg. 1)

So, our Advent journey with the Immaculata must be with hearts filled with expectant, Marian love for the long-awaited Savior.

One of the recent readings for November had a quote from the Gospel of St. Matthew: "Let your yes be yes." Let us with greater fervor than ever join our "yes" with Mary's "Yes" to His coming. It is that ever-deepening Marian "yes" in our hearts that is the incense, frankincense and myrrh that honors His coming now and always.

Let us "enter" into Mary's pregnancy, waiting in expectation for the Prince of Peace. May the great blessing of His Birth dawn in our hearts like the Day Star and in that Presence know the Peace that surpasses all understanding.

Christmas blessings on all of you, your families, and the whole MI movement in the United States.

Until next time, "Arise, let us be on our way!"

John W. Galten  
MI National President

## Advent Journey

**MAKE** room in your heart  
**ADORE** humbly & gratefully  
**GIVE** of yourself  
**NOTICE** God's inspirations  
**IGNORE** distractions and temptations  
**FOCUS** and discern His hidden Presence  
**IGNITE** the fire of Love  
**CONSENT**, give Him your Yes and trust Him  
**ARISE** and do not be afraid  
**TAKE** Him to others



May Our Lady  
accompany us  
to encounter  
Our Savior,  
her Divine Child,  
this Christmas!  
May His peace  
transform  
our lives and our  
world  
with hope and  
love.



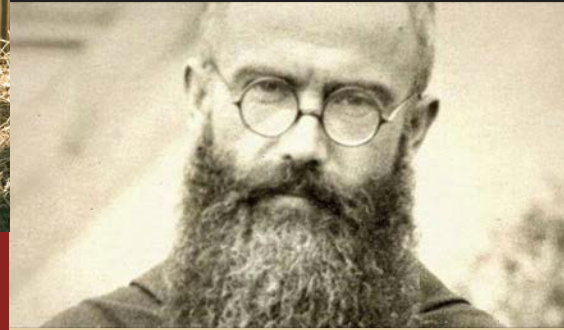
Daily Holy Mass

will be offered throughout 2021 for the MI-USA and all MI Members 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 New MI Film!



This important new short film, released on the feast of St. Maximilian, Friday, August 14, beautifully and eloquently captures the essence of the MI: total consecration to the Immaculata in the evangelical spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

## Watch the Film!

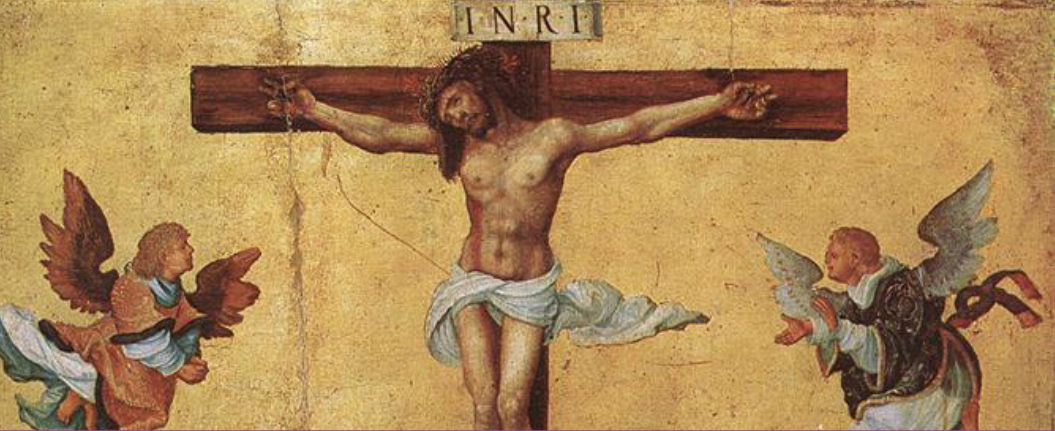
**"Simply excellent!"**

**"Inspirational!"**

Share the link  
<http://militiaoftheimmaculata.com/mi-movie/>  
to the MI Film with as many people as possible!

Forward the link to your family and friends or 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!*



## Our Times: The Age of Martyrs by Servant of God Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

Never in the history of the papacy has any Bishop of Rome written at greater length about martyrdom than Pope John Paul II. His encyclical *The Gospel of Life* devotes a thousand or more words to the call to martyrdom in our age. He reminds us that the revelation from the Old Testament to the new, and from the time of Christ to the present day, is the history of martyrdom as a witness to the truth.

He names Susanna, who refused to consent to lechery and was ready to die to preserve her chastity. He spoke of John the Baptist who was beheaded by King Herod because he condemned the adulterous marriage of the king. But he especially identifies Jesus Christ as the king of martyrs, who died on the cross as a witness to the Truth which He was sent to proclaim to the world.

So the history of courageous practice and profession of the Truth has gone on for twenty centuries of Christianity.

We commonly speak of the first three hundred years of the Christian era as the Age of Martyrs. Certainly tens of thousands of believing Christians laid down their lives, rather than compromise their Christian faith and morality to the pagan culture in which they lived. Every single Pope up to the fourth century died a martyr's death.

So, far from crushing Christianity or destroying the church founded by Christ, martyrdom actually contributed to the growth of a Christian civilization. The phrase, *sanguis martyrum est semen Christianorum*—"the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians"—was not a pious aphorism. It was a literal fact of history. The more blood was shed by Christians in dying for their faith, the more Christianity

expanded throughout what had been a pagan world.

### *Modern Paganism*

All that we have said so far was a prelude to the message that I wish to leave with you. Paganism is as old as human history. In one sentence, paganism is a culture of untruth. Over the two thousand years since Calvary, Christianity has had to constantly contend with pagan ideas, pagan laws; in a word, with a pagan culture that hated Christianity for the same reason that it crucified the Incarnate Truth, who became man to teach the world how to serve God here on earth, in order to possess Him in a blessed eternity.

There are differences, however, between a paganism that has never been Christianized, and a once-Christian society that has become paganized. In my judgment, this is the condition in which faithful Christians who are believing Catholics find themselves as we approach the third millennium. In a country like America, whose supreme court in the early years of this century called a Christian nation, they find themselves surrounded by a paganism that is literally directed by the prince of this world. It is a paganism whose father is the evil spirit, whom Christ identified as the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. There are therefore two qualities of this modern paganism which no one can rationally deny. It is first of all a culture of death, and secondly it is a society penetrated with the untruth. Can anyone doubt that our society is a culture of death? The lowest statistic for the number of abortions throughout the world is sixty-five million. One once-civilized nation after another has legal-

ized the abortion of not only the unborn, but of the newly born. Infanticide is now part of accepted American practice. So-called euthanasia and assisted suicide are accepted as part of modern life. On the side of truth, no one has better expressed what is going on than Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian philosopher of social psychology. "The modern media," wrote McLuhan, "are engaged in Luciferian conspiracy against the truth." Millions of words are published every day and heard over the radio and television. Consciously and deliberately, much of this written and spoken communication is not true. It is estimated that ninety percent of the books borrowed from American libraries are fiction. Whole nations are living in a dream world created by the media, and the dreams are scientifically calculated to keep the human mind from contact with reality.

We define "truth" as conformity of the mind with reality. On these terms, must we not say that the evil spirit is demonically successful in deceiving whole nations by filling their minds with lies?

### *The Need for Martyrs*

Given the widespread culture of death and plague of untruth in our day, is it any wonder that the followers of Christ must pay dearly for their loyalty to the Master, who identified Himself as the Life and the Truth? You do not remain faithful to the Savior without paying for it. This has been the story of Christianity since the first Good Friday, when Jesus was crucified by His enemies. Why did they crucify Him? Because He taught that we were made for a life that will never end, and because He would not compromise on the Truth which He had received from His Father.

This has been the verdict of Christian history ever since, and will remain the same until the end of time. Those who want to remain loyal to Jesus Christ must expect to suffer for their witness to Incarnate Life and Truth. Another name for this suffering witness is martyrdom.

### *What is Martyrdom?*

The best description of martyrdom was given by Christ Himself just before He ascended into heaven. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," He told the disciples, "and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

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Here we have capsulized in one sentence the motivating power of martyrdom, its nature, and its apostolic purpose.

The source of strength to suffer for Christ comes finally from the Holy Spirit, who is said to give power. In the language of the New Testament, this power is the same kind of power by which miracles can be worked. The nature of martyrdom is to witness, except that when Christ spoke to the disciples He did not say “You shall be my witnesses,” but, “You shall be my martyrs,” which tells us exactly what we want to know. The essence of being a martyr is to be a witness. And we know what a witness does. He gives testimony publicly that something he saw or heard is true. He has experience of a fact or an event, and as a witness he declares that what he says or signs his name to is so. He gives evidence to others that what he testifies to should be believed. Why? Because he personally knows.

We are liable to miss the preceding adjective “my” in the clause “You shall be my martyrs.” This prefix is crucial. Those who are martyrs are witnesses to Christ. They testify, if need be with their blood, that what they believe is true because they have known Christ. The implication is that in order to be a witness, even to martyrdom, one must have experienced Christ, in a way comparable to what Peter told the early Christians: “You did not see Him, yet you love Him. And still without seeing Him, you are already filled with joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe” (1 Pt 1:8).

So it was in the apostolic age, and so it is in ours. In order to witness to Christ we must believe in Him so strongly that we are filled with His joy. This joy is, of course, as Peter explained, not devoid of pain.

But it is genuine and unmistakable. It is also profoundly communicable. In fact, one of the paradoxes of martyrdom is the positive happiness that a strongly committed follower of Christ has in suffering for Christ. This is brought out dramatically by St. Luke in describing the second summons of the Apostles before the Sanhedrin, after they had been warned not to preach about the Savior. The Apostles were flogged and warned again not to speak in the name of Jesus. As they left the jail where they had been scourged, they were “glad to have had the honor of suffering humiliation for the sake of the name” (Acts 5:40-41).

### ***Martyrdom of Persecution***

Not all the faithful who suffer for Christ also die for Christ. Opposition to the Christian faith and way of life does not always end in violent death for the persecuted victims.

Consequently, it is well to distinguish between what may be called martyrdom of blood and martyrdom of opposition, which is bloodless indeed, but no less—and sometimes more—painful to endure.

Not all the victims of persecution die at the hands of a godless government. Millions more are ostensibly free to walk the streets and live in a home. Yet they are, in effect, deprived of every human liberty to practice their religion and to serve Christ according to their Faith. If they teach their children catechism, the parents are prevented from enjoying such privileges as de-

*“Those who are martyrs are witnesses to Christ. They testify, if need be with their blood, that what they believe is true because they have known Christ.”*

cent living quarters or any kind of skilled job to overcome and withstand.

All we have to do is place the eight beatitudes in one column and the eight corresponding attitudes of our culture in another column, and compare the two. Where Christ advocates poverty, the world despises the poor and canonizes the rich. Where Christ praises gentleness, the world belittles meekness and extols those who succeed by crushing anyone who stands in their way. Where Christ encourages mourning and sorrow for sin, the world revels in pleasure and the noise of empty laughter. Where Christ promises joy only to those who seek justice and holiness, the world offers satisfaction in the enjoyment of sin. Where Christ bids us forgive and show mercy to those who have offended us, the world seeks vengeance and its law courts are filled with demands for retribution. Where Christ blesses those who

are pure of heart, the world scoffs at chastity and makes a god of sex. Where Christ tells the peaceful that they shall be rewarded, the world teaches just the opposite in constant rebellion and violence and massive preparation for war. And where Christ teaches the incredible doctrine of accepting persecution with patience and resignation to God’s will, the world dreads nothing more than criticism and rejection; and human respect which means acceptance by society, is the moral norm.

On the bloody side, our century has had more Christians who were martyred for Christ than in all the centuries from Calvary to nineteen hundred included. I should know because not a few of my own relatives behind the iron curtain have shed their blood for Christ rather than deny their Catholic Faith.

To this day, innumerable Catholics are dying for their faith at the hands of Muslims who are told by the Koran to either convert Christians from their idolatry of adoring the man Jesus as though he were God, or put them to death. But my focus here is on our own country. Call it an unbloody martyrdom. But have no doubt that to live an authentic Catholic life in America today is to live a martyr’s life.

This is my fiftieth year in the priesthood, and I can testify to every syllable of the following sentence: Only heroic bishops and heroic priests, heroic religious, heroic fathers and mothers, heroic faithful, will survive the massive persecution of the Catholic Church in our country today. We call ourselves the Land of Liberty. But the only liberty that is given freedom is the liberty to do your own will. Pro-choice is not just a clever phrase. It is the hallmark of a culture in which millions have chosen to do what they want and make life humanly impossible for those who choose to do what God wants.

### ***Martyrdom of Witness***

We still have one more type of martyrdom to reflect on, and it is, in a way, the most pervasive of all because no follower of Christ can escape it. This is the martyrdom of witness.

What do we mean by martyrdom of witness and how does it differ from the other two? It differs from them in that, even in the absence of active opposition, the imitation of Christ must always face passive opposition. From whom? From those who lack a clear vision of the Savior or who, having had it, lost their former commitment to Christ. All that we have

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## Our Times: The Age of Martyrs

(continued from pg. 4)

seen about the martyrdom by violence applies here too, but the method of opposition is different. Here the firm believer in the Church's teaching authority; the devoted servant of the papacy; the convinced pastor who insists on sound doctrine to his flock; the dedicated religious who want to remain faithful to their vows of authentic poverty, honest chastity, and sincere obedience; the firm parents who are concerned about the religious and moral training of their children and are willing to sacrifice generously to build and care for a Christian family—natural or adopted—such persons will not be spared also active criticism and open opposition. But they must especially be ready to live in an atmosphere of coldness to their deepest beliefs.

Sometimes they would almost wish the opposition were more overt and even persecution would be a welcome change. It is the studied indifference of people whom they know and love, of persons in their own natural or religious family, of men and women whose intelligence they respect and whose respect they cherish.

This kind of apathy can be demoralizing and, unless it finds relief, can be devastating. To continue living a Christ-like life in this kind of environment is to practice the martyrdom of witness. Why witness? Because it means giving

testimony to our deep religious convictions although all around us others are giving their own example to the contrary.

It means giving witness twice over: once on our own behalf as the outward expression of what we internally believe and once again on behalf of others whose conduct is not only different from ours but contradicts it.

Wherein lies the martyrdom? It lies in the deprivation of good example to us on the part of our contemporaries, and in the practice of Christian virtue in loneliness, because those who witness what we do are in the majority—numerically or psychologically—and we know they are being challenged and embarrassed by the testimony. We witness to them, indeed, but they are not pleased to witness who we are, what we stand for, what we say, or what we do.

Notwithstanding all of this, however, it behooves us to look at the positive side of the picture. We must remind ourselves that this witness of ours is not so sterile as we may suppose; quite the contrary. Although we may be, or at least feel, often quite alone, we are not alone at all. Not infrequently our severest critics can become our strongest admirers. In any case, witness that we give by living up to the conviction of our Faith is surely demanding on human nature. That is why we call it martyrdom. But it is a witness to the truth and God's grace is always active in the hearts of everyone whose path we cross.

If we would know the power of this martyrdom of witness we have only to read the annals of the early Church. The handful of believers whom Peter baptized on Pentecost Sunday were as a drop in the immense culture surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Yet see what happened. This small group of convinced faithful were able, in less than three hundred years, to turn the tide of paganism in the Roman Empire. For a long time they were deprived even of the basic civil rights accorded other citizens. They were often hunted like animals, and the catacombs tell us that they had to hide when celebrating the Liturgy and hide the tombs of their revered dead.

But their patience and meekness finally prevailed. Yes, but only because it was supported by unbounded courage, born not of their own strength, but of the power that Christ promised to give all His followers that shall witness to His name everywhere. This promise is just as true today. All that we need is to trust in the Spirit Whom we possess, and never grow weary in giving testimony to the grace we received.

This is what Christ was talking about when He told us not to hide our virtues but to allow them to be publicly seen, like a candle on a candlestick or a city on a mountaintop. We should not be afraid that by such evidence of our good works we shall be protected from vainglory by the cost in humiliation that witnessing to a holy life inevitably brings. There will have to be enough death to self and enough ignoring of human respect to keep us from getting proud in our well-doing. God will see to that. On our part, we must be willing to pay the price of suffering in doing good, which is another name for being a living martyr, that is, a courageous witness to the life of Christ in the world today.

### Prayer

Mary, Mother of our Redeemer, we want to be faithful to His teaching and never compromise our Faith. But we are weak. Obtain for us from Jesus the strength to live a martyr's life in the modern world. If it is God's will we ask for a martyr's death. Help us, we pray, to face the oppositions from those who reject your Son. Mary, Queen of martyrs, pray for us.

Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J.

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*For more articles by the Servant of God Fr. John Hardon, visit [www.hardonsj.org](http://www.hardonsj.org)*

# MI

## YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



**“To always be close to Jesus, that’s my life plan.” Bl. Carlo Acutis**

### 15 Inspiring Quotes from the New Blessed

- 1) “The Eucharist is the highway to heaven.”
- 2) “Our soul is like a hot air balloon. If by chance there is a mortal sin, the soul falls to the ground. Confession is like the fire underneath the balloon enabling the soul to rise again. . . It is important to go to confession often.”
- 3) “Continuously ask your guardian angel for help. Your guardian angel has to become your best friend.”
- 4) “All people are born as originals but many die as photocopies.”
- 5) “I am happy to die because I lived my life without wasting even a minute of it on anything displeasing to God.”
- 6) “The Virgin Mary is the only woman in my life.”
- 7) “I offer all the suffering I will have to suffer for the Lord, for the Pope, and the Church.”
- 8) “Do not be afraid because with the Incarnation of Jesus, death becomes life, and there’s no need to escape: in eternal life, something extraordinary awaits us.”
- 9) “The more Eucharist we receive, the more we will become like Jesus, so that on this earth we will have a foretaste of heaven.”
- 10) “When we face the sun we get a tan... but when we stand before Jesus in the Eucharist we become saints.”
- 11) “By standing before the Eucharistic Christ, we become holy.”
- 12) “Our goal must be infinite, not the finite. The infinite is our homeland. Heaven has been waiting for us forever.”
- 13) “Sadness is looking at ourselves, happiness is looking towards God.”
- 14) “The only thing we have to ask God for, in prayer, is the desire to be holy.”
- 15) “What does it matter if you can win a thousand battles if you cannot win against your own corrupt passions? It doesn’t matter. The real battle is with ourselves.”

**On October 10, 2020, at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, the first millennial, Carlo Acutis, was declared Blessed.**

Cardinal Vallini, who presided over the Holy Mass, during his homily said that, for Carlo, Jesus was “the strength of his life and the purpose of everything he did. He was convinced that to love people and do them good you need to draw energy from the Lord. In this spirit he was very devoted to Our Lady. His ardent desire was also that of attracting as many people to Jesus, making himself herald of the Gospel above all with the example of life. At a young age, Acutis taught himself how to program and went on to create websites cataloging the world’s Eucharistic miracles and Marian apparitions.

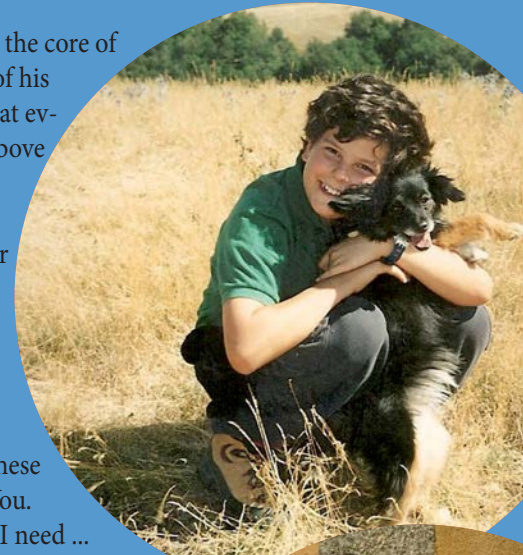
“The Church rejoices, because in this very young Blessed the Lord’s words are fulfilled: ‘I have chosen you and appointed you to go and bear much fruit.’ And Carlo ‘went’ and brought the fruit of holiness, showing it as a goal reachable by all and not as something abstract and reserved for a few. He was an ordinary boy, simple, spontaneous,... he loved nature and animals, he played football, he had many friends of his age, he was attracted by modern means of social communication, passionate about computer science and, self-taught, he built websites to transmit the Gospel, to communicate values and beauty,” he said.

### Prayer

O Father, who have given us the ardent testimony of the young Blessed Carlo Acutis, who made the Eucharist the core of his life and the strength of his daily commitments so that everybody may love You above all else, let him soon be counted among the Saints in Your Church. Confirm my faith, nurture my hope, strengthen my charity, in the image of young Carlo who, growing in these virtues, now lives with You. Grant me the grace that I need ... I trust in You, Father, and Your Beloved Son Jesus, in the Virgin Mary, our Dearest Mother, and in the intervention of Your Blessed Carlo Acutis.

*Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be*

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+Angelo Mascheroni



For more information about Blessed Carlo Acutis, visit the official website: [carloacutis.com/en/](http://carloacutis.com/en/)

***Bl. Carlo Acutis, pray for us!***



## Reflection on December MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that the humility and poverty embraced by Christ and you may be a constant inspiration for our lives.

*“So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.”*  
(Lk 2:16)

Upon receiving the message from the Angel of the Lord, the shepherds went in haste and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger. Bethlehem speaks to us of our God who, in becoming a little Child, welcomes all our human weakness and precisely in that state of powerlessness saves the world with the sole power of Love. Bethlehem speaks of a woman, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who allowed herself to be looked upon by God, who listened to His Voice, and responded to His plan of love for her and mankind. Mary’s heart was poor and able to welcome God’s love. The shepherds listened to and believed in the words of the Angel. They did so because their hearts too were poor, and thus able to recognize God in the littleness of a child. They are models of faith for us, whom the Lord invites to have hearts so poor as to be able to trust Him and place our lives into His hands.

Let us ask the Immaculata to help us immerse ourselves in this mystery of Divine Love, the Incarnation of the Son of God in her womb, the mystery of our Redemption, so incomprehensible to our limited human intellect.

This year, as we contemplate the crèche, let us recall the words of St. Maximilian, as he attempted to delve into this mystery of love: *“You knew exactly who that Child was, for the prophets had spoken of Him, and you understood them better than all the Pharisees and scholars of Scripture. The Holy Spirit had given an incomparably greater amount of light to you than to all other souls taken together. In addition, how many mysteries regarding Jesus must that Divine Spirit who lived and operated in you have revealed only and exclusively to your immaculate soul! At that moment, you had fully realized what you were giving your consent to, of whom you were about to become a mother!”* (KW 1236).

As he meditated constantly on the humility of God made Man, St. Maximilian gradually transformed his life into an unconditional gift of love.

*“Who would dare to imagine that You, O infinite and eternal God, have loved me for ages, and more than that, from before the ages? ...For me You created the heavens adorned with constellations of stars, for me the earth, the seas, the mountains, the rivers and the many, many beautiful things here on earth... As if this was not enough, to show me that You really love me tenderly, You descended from the pure delights of heaven to this degraded world full of tears. You led a hard life in poverty and suffering; finally, despised and derided, You chose to be hung up on a base scaffold in terrible pain between two thieves... O God of love, You have redeemed me in this terrible but generous way!... Who would dare to imagine?”*(KW 1145).

St. Francis of Assisi too, grateful for the birth of the Child Jesus, on Christmas Day was filled with special joy and love for His creatures. *“If I knew the emperor—Francis used to say—I would ask him to issue an order on that day so that wheat could be scattered for all birds, especially swallows. And I would ask him to command all those who have cattle in the stalls to feed their animals more abundantly, in memory of Christ’s birth in a manger. I also wish that, on that solemn day, all the wealthy men of this world would welcome some poor people to their table!”* (Celano, *Vita secunda*, 151; *Speculum Perfectionis*, 124).” (Cfr. KW 1020).

Our Lord Jesus Christ chose a life of poverty and sacrificial love as He dwelt among us. May we, through the intercession of the Immaculata, Mother of all people, learn to surrender ourselves to Him, to recognize Him in the poor and to share with generous hearts His gifts this Christmas.

(From the International 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.



# The Journey of a Prodigal

## An MI Member's Testimonial

I am what I am today because, after the death of my mother in 2006 followed by the deaths of my oldest and youngest siblings, extreme grief softened my hardened heart, causing a most profound conversion of heart. I am a cradle Catholic, but spent 25 years away from my faith. I was too weak in faith and lacking in an understanding of dogma to resist the lure of the world and I know full well of the misery of sin and darkness outside the safe haven of the Holy Catholic Apostolic Church.

My reconversion started with a dream that my mother's Christmas Nativity set, which had been stashed in my attic and not displayed for years, was destroyed by a roof leak and when I picked each of the precious pieces up, they dissolved in my hands. When I awoke, I was sure the dream was true and quickly went up to the attic, only to discover it was just a bad dream.

Carefully bringing this forgotten Nativity set from the attic, overcome with remorse, I fell on my knees thanking God and begging forgiveness. Thus began not only mine but my husband's return to the Father, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, sometime in 2012, where both I and my priest wept, along with a journey of surrender to my Queen of Heaven, who brought both of us back to Jesus, Whom we love above all.

I take no credit personally for any of the following milestones of my journey. I give all honor and glory to Mary, the Mother of God, and Jesus, the Author of Love and forgiveness for everything. I am a poor sinner. My husband and I dug out our

rosaries. I had one that was black with tarnish, and that now, with use, glows. We steadily became daily devotees of saying the Rosary, saying it out loud together every time we got in the car. May 13th of 2014 we both consecrated ourselves to Jesus through Mary, following the plan of St. Louis de Montfort. We now are urged to become more active in our parish and in September of 2016, my pastor asked me to organize a pilgrimage to the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Detroit, where we led a busload of pilgrims through the Door of Merry. My written pledge to God, written on a ribbon and tied to the door was to be a Saint.

To accomplish this, the Mother of God asked me in October of 2017 to join the Militia of the Immaculata, and those powerful prayers have protected me from doubting the mercy of God, as often besets those who commit grave sin. Mary wants me to commit to praying for the conversion of other sinners like myself, and the forgotten souls in Purgatory. The blessed Mother wanted me to understand for the first time the precious truths of the Catholic faith and she brought me in 2017 to undertake its study in the Marian Catechists Apostolate. This study uses the faithful catechesis of Servant of God Fr. John Hardon. For two years I studied and after much hard work I officially became a Marian Catechist on August 15, 2020. Now I embark on the next wish of my Blessed Mother, by

teaching 1st grade Catechism, and to assist in teaching RCIA candidates.

I remember to give myself every day to Jesus without reserve. My only desire in life is to do everything possible to maintain constant friendship with Jesus my Lord. I count each day wasted if I have not focused on this necessary action in my life. I want to be empty of me so Jesus can use whatever He finds worthwhile in me to help my husband and family attain heaven and to help suffering souls that He and I encounter. I wasted too many years living recklessly, hot and cold in my relationship with Jesus, and I know how fickle I can be, so I am working daily to strengthen my faith through knowledge of God and knowledge of my faith.

I want my relationship with Jesus to be authentic and faith to be unwavering. I am confident, because of my Consecration to Jesus through Mary that the Blessed Mother will continue to guide me and keep my heart humble and true.

I pray that anyone who reads this testimony will say an *Ave* for my husband and myself.

JMJ  
Rita Warfel

**ATTENTION MI MEMBERS!**

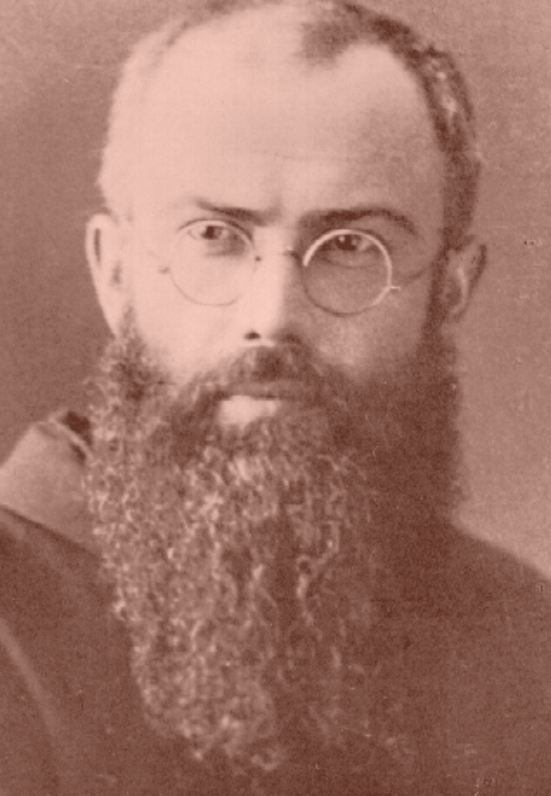
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**For the Feast of the Immaculata**  
 In war stricken 1940, St. Maximilian wrote this last article on the feast dearest to his heart (KW 1245).

December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, is approaching again.

On every feast of the Mother of God, souls instinctively feel the need to clear their consciences, but even more so on the day of the Immaculate Conception.

For the occasion, those who are able will approach the Sacrament of Penance. Those whose circumstances prevent them will endeavor at least to wash their souls clean with an act of perfect sorrow, the sorrow of a child who loves, and thinks not so much about punishment or reward, but rather about asking its father and mother forgiveness for causing them grief.

And it is reasonable to desire to purify one's conscience on the feast of the one whose conscience was never stained by sin.

The souls who know her more closely and love her most fervently strive harder to make their consciences always more pure and sensitive, with the aim of resembling her more and more, to please her more and more, to make her ever happier. But what is the evil that defiles conscience?

If virtue is love of God and all that proceeds from that love, then evil will be all that is opposed to that love. From this evil, then, the soul increasingly defends itself, eager to become always more immaculate, following the example of its beloved Lady and spiritual Mother.

On this day, the souls consecrated to her in a special way renew their oblation to her. So also the members of the Militia of the Immaculata, after holy Confession and Communion, repeat their act of consecration, and by way of such renewal obtain a plenary indulgence, namely the remission of all punishments that, after the forgiveness of sin, would still have to be atoned for on this earth, or after death in Purgatory.

On the day of the Immaculata, after the purification of conscience, after the renewal of the act of consecration, after acquiring the remission of punishment, the soul more easily reaches inner peace and even joy, knowing that no cross, neither internal nor external, can possibly weigh on them without God knowing it and allowing it, that is, without the consent of the Heavenly Father who truly loves souls and allows only that which contributes to the eternal good of souls.

The fruit of this feast, therefore, is greater, ever greater purity of conscience, ever deeper peace, a peace in submission to Divine Providence, and an ever greater willingness to perform one's duties in the best way possible, thereby giving proof of one's love for the spiritual Mother and the Heavenly Father.

Maximilian Kolbe

**Invite Friends to be consecrated to Our Lady!**



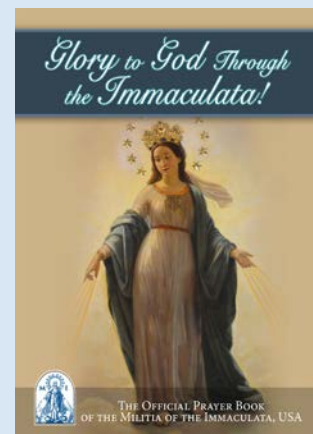
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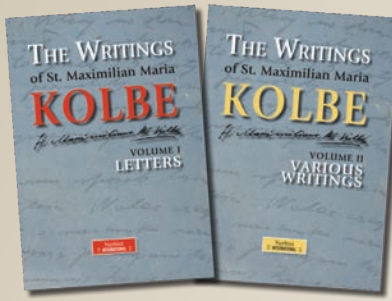


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 St. Maximilian Kolbe

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