

THE KNIGHT OF THE  
*Immaculata*  
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THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
MARY IS FULL OF  
GRACE

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# THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

by Ronald L. Rodrigues, MI National President

**D**ear Knights of the Immaculata, Maria! True Peace and Love can only be brought about with Jesus in our Hearts. This understanding is missing in our society today. We seem to be led to think of "what's best for me, damn everyone else," but we were made for more. We were made to love and cherish each other; it is instilled within our hearts. We just have to look and open that door. "Ask and it will be given to you; Seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." (Mt 7:7) Mary is that person who shows us her motherly love and leads us to her Son, Jesus. Mary is needed in this world more than ever. There is so much hate and violence in the hearts of men. We have lost our way. There is only one road that can lead us back to that inner peace, that love we were made for, that disposition within us that causes our souls to seek their Maker.

December is that special month for believers and non-believers alike. Whether you celebrate Christmas with God or without, it brings family together, it brings about healing, and love for each other. Those who don't believe in God don't realize His love is working in their hearts this day. Evil doesn't bring about love or friendship. If only they could open their hearts and see the truth!

December 8th is a very special day for me: the celebration of the Immaculate Conception declared a

dogma by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. Mary confirmed this dogma on March 25, 1858, in Lourdes, when she told St. Bernadette her name: "I am the Immaculate Conception." On December 8, I recall my consecration day, the day I gave myself fully to Mary. It is a day that forever changed my life. I hope all our Knights recall that special day, the day our new life began under the mantle of Mary. St. Maximilian Kolbe only visited Lourdes once prior to departing for Japan. He had a profound love and devotion to Our Lady and went to Lourdes to ask for prayers prior to his trip. Moreover, his thumb had been healed by water from Lourdes while he was in the seminary. St. Maximilian would do anything for our Blessed Mother.



**Daily Holy Mass**

will be offered throughout 2024 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](mailto:PrayerRequest@MissionImmaculata.com)

He lived his life for her knowing she was always bringing him closer to Jesus Christ, her Son. He fully understood her role in our salvation and knew that the closer he was to the Immaculata the closer he became to Jesus Christ. Of all the saints, I am not sure if there was one that lived and loved our Blessed Mother more than St. Maximilian Kolbe. His love for and devotion to Our Lady gives me inspiration and hope. His example helps me understand how much I need the Virgin Mary in my life. Mary being born without sin became the new Eve and later the Mother of our Church, the Mother of all of God's children, Our Mother. Christmas is almost upon us, that holy season when we can experience the peace brought by the birth of Christ. There is something about this time of the year that changes hearts and minds. We try to make peace with our relatives that we may not have seen for a long time due to some disagreement or fight we had in the past. Families with feuds or even hate for one another try to make amends, if only for one night, that Christmas Night. What is it that brings about this feeling of peace and love for one another? Soldiers want peace if only for that special night. They see each other as human beings, children of God, not just as an evil object to kill, if only for a brief night. Silent night rings in their ears. There is a spirit of love and peace that can be found on this special night.

(Continues on pg. 14)



# THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY IS FULL OF GRACE

FROM THE MARIAN CATECHESSES OF POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

**M**ary, “full of grace,” has been recognized by the Church as “all holy and free from every stain of sin,” “enriched from the first instant of her conception with the splendor of an entirely unique holiness” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 56). This recognition required a long process of doctrinal reflection, which finally led to the solemn proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. The title “*made full of grace*,” addressed by the angel to Mary at the Annunciation, refers to the exceptional divine favor shown to the young woman of Nazareth in view of the motherhood which was announced, but it indicates more directly the effect of divine grace in Mary; Mary was inwardly and permanently imbued with grace and thus sanctified. The title *kecharitoméne* has a very rich meaning and the Holy Spirit has never ceased deepening the Church’s understanding of it.

## SANCTIFYING GRACE MADE MARY A NEW CREATION

In the angel’s greeting the expression “full of grace” serves almost as a name: it is Mary’s name in the eyes of God. In Semitic usage, a name expresses the reality of the persons and things to which it refers. As a result, the title “full of grace” shows the deepest dimension of the young woman of Nazareth’s personality: fashioned by grace and the object of divine favor to the point that she can be defined by this special predilection. The Council recalls that the Church Fathers alluded to this truth when they called Mary the “all-holy one,” affirming at the same time that she was “fashioned as it were by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature” (*Lumen gentium*, n. 56). Grace, understood in the sense of “sanctifying grace” which produces personal holiness, brought about

the new creation in Mary, making her fully conformed to God’s plan. Doctrinal reflection could thus attribute to Mary a perfection of holiness that, in order to be complete, had necessarily to include the beginning of her life. Bishop Theoteknos of Livias in Palestine, who lived between 550 and 650, seems to have moved in the direction of this original purity. In presenting Mary as “holy and all-fair,” “pure and stainless,” he referred to her birth in these words: “She is born like the cherubim, she who is of a pure, immaculate clay” (*Panegyric for the feast of the Assumption*, 5-6).

This last expression, recalling the creation of the first man, fashioned of a clay not stained by sin, attributes the same characteristics to Mary’s birth: the Virgin’s origin was also “pure and immaculate,” that is, without any sin. The comparison with the cherubim also emphasizes the outstanding holiness that



“Outstanding holiness characterized Mary’s life from the very beginning of her existence.”





## MARY'S ENMITY TOWARD THE DEVIL IS ABSOLUTE

Along with Luke's account of the Annunciation, Tradition and the Magisterium have seen in the so-called *Protoevangelium* (Gn 3:15) a scriptural source for the truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception. On the basis of the ancient Latin version: "She will crush your head," this text inspired many depictions of the Immaculata crushing the serpent under her feet.

This version does not agree with the Hebrew text, in which it is not the woman but her offspring, her descendant, who will bruise the serpent's head. This text then does not attribute the victory over Satan to Mary but to her Son. Nevertheless, since the biblical concept establishes a profound solidarity between the parent and the offspring, the depiction of the Immaculata crushing the serpent, not by her own power but through the grace of her Son, is consistent with the original meaning of the passage.

The same biblical text also proclaims the enmity between the woman and her Offspring on the one hand, and the serpent and his offspring on the other. This is a hostility expressly established by God, which has a unique importance, if we consider the problem of the Virgin's personal holiness. In order to be the irreconcilable enemy of the serpent and his offspring, Mary had to be free from all power of sin, and to be so from the first moment of her existence.

In this regard, the Encyclical *Fulgens corona*, published by Pope Pius XII in 1953 to commemorate the centenary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, reasons thus: "If at a given moment the Blessed Virgin Mary had been left without divine grace, because she was defiled at her conception by the hereditary stain of sin, between her and the serpent there would no longer have been—at least during this period of time, however brief—that eternal enmity spoken of in the earliest tradition up to the definition of the Immaculate Conception, but rather a certain enslavement" (AAS 45 [1953], 579).

The absolute hostility put between the woman and the devil thus demands in Mary the Immaculate Conception, that is, a total absence of sin, from the very beginning of her life. The Son of Mary won the definitive victory over Satan and enabled his Mother to receive its benefits in advance by preserving her from sin. As a result, the Son granted her the power to resist the devil, thus achieving in the mystery of the Immaculate Conception the most notable effect of his redeeming work.

Pope St. John Paul II  
Excerpts from the General Audience of May 29, 1996

characterized Mary's life from the very beginning of her existence. Theoteknos' assertion marks a significant stage in the theological reflection on the mystery of the Lord's Mother. The Greek and Eastern Fathers had acknowledged a purification brought about by grace in Mary, either before the Incarnation (St Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio* 38,16) or at the very moment of the Incarnation (St. Ephrem, Severian of Gabala, James of Sarug). Theoteknos of Livias seems to have required of Mary an absolute purity from the beginning of her life. Indeed, she who was destined to become the Savior's Mother had to have had a perfectly holy, completely stainless origin. In the eighth century, Andrew of Crete is the first theologian to see a new creation in Mary's birth. This is how he reasons: "Today humanity, in all the radiance of her immaculate nobility, receives its ancient beauty. The shame of sin had darkened the splendour and attraction of human nature;

but when the Mother of the Fair One *par excellence* is born, this nature regains in her person its ancient privileges and is fashioned according to a perfect model truly worthy of God.... The reform of our nature begins today and the aged world, subjected to a wholly divine transformation, receives the first fruits of the second creation" (*Serm. I on the Birth of Mary*). Then, taking up again the image of the primordial clay, he states: "The Virgin's body is ground which God has tilled, the first fruits of Adam's soil divinized by Christ, the image truly like the former beauty, the clay kneaded by the divine Artist" (*Serm. I on the Dormition of Mary*).

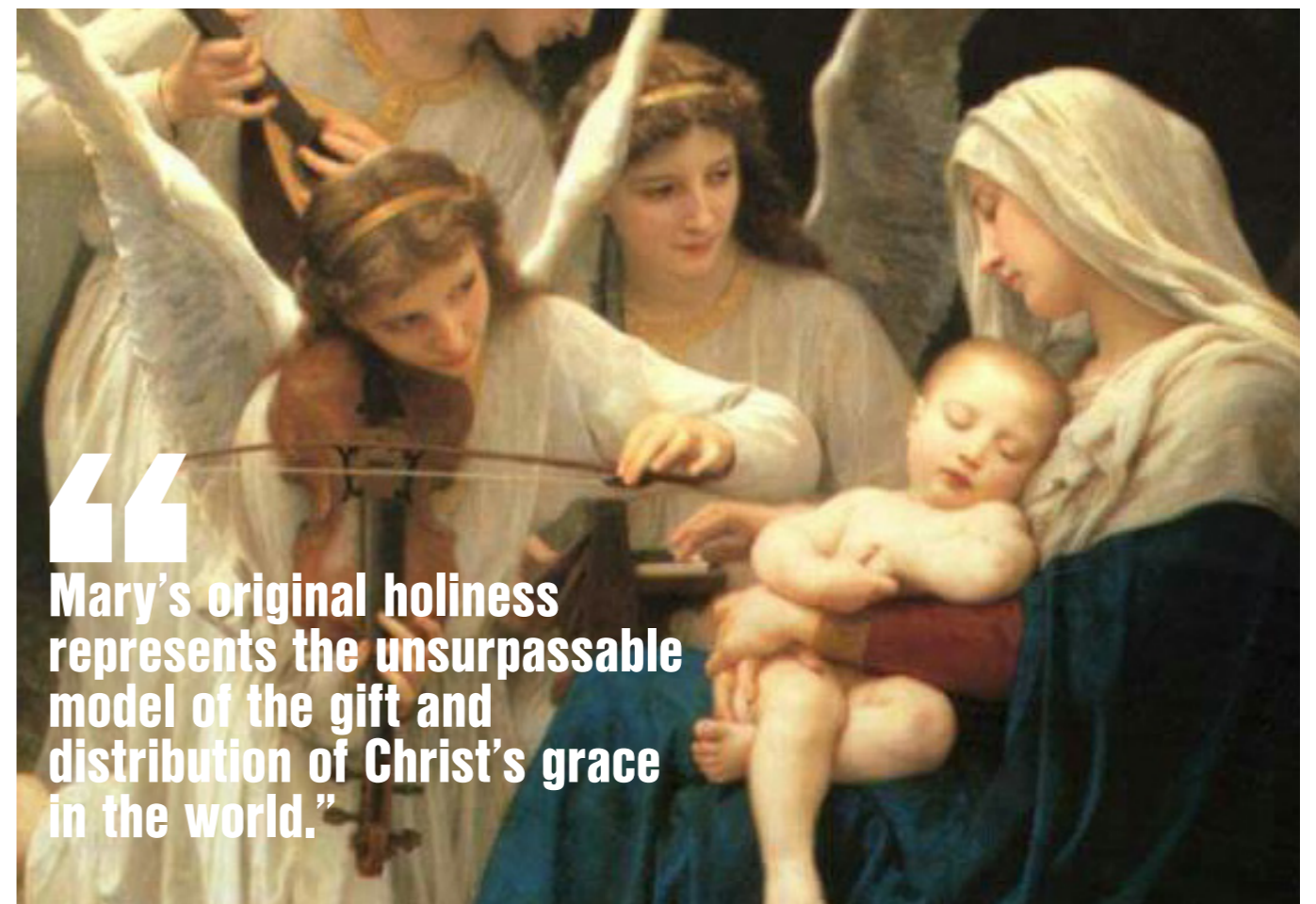
## MARY'S ORIGINAL HOLINESS IS BEGINNING OF REDEMPTION

Mary's pure and immaculate conception is thus seen as the

beginning of the new creation. It is a question of a personal privilege granted to the woman chosen to be Christ's Mother, who ushers in the time of abundant grace willed by God for all humanity. This doctrine, taken up again in the eighth century by St. Germanus of Constantinople and St. John Damascene, sheds light on the value of Mary's original holiness, presented as the beginning of the world's Redemption.

In this way the Church's tradition assimilates and makes explicit the authentic meaning of the title "full of grace" given by the angel to the Blessed Virgin. Mary is full of sanctifying grace and is so from the first moment of her existence. This grace, according to the Letter to the Ephesians (1:6), is bestowed in Christ on all believers. Mary's original holiness represents the unsurpassable model of the gift and the distribution of Christ's grace in the world.

Pope St. John Paul II, General Audience of May 15, 1996



“  
Mary's original holiness represents the unsurpassable model of the gift and distribution of Christ's grace in the world.”



# VIGILANT IN PRAYER AND JOYFUL IN PRAISE AN ADVENT GUIDE

## JOURNEYING TO BETHLEHEM WITH ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

As we journey through the Advent season, each day we will draw inspiration from:

- The Responsorial Psalm of the day;
- St. Maximilian Kolbe's resolutions, which he noted in his journal (KW 987);
- An invocation taken from the biblical Litanies of Our Lady.

### FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT

#### DECEMBER 3

Psalm 80

Lord, make us turn to You; let us see Your face and we shall be saved.

† *"Imitate what you see of good in others."*  
Daughter of Zion, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 4

Psalm 122

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

† *"Love! That is all."*  
Heir of the promise, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 5

Psalm 72

Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace for ever.

† *"Let yourself be led; be faithful to inspirations."*  
Tabernacle of the Most High, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 6

Psalm 23

I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

† *"May the thought of Heaven urge you to great virtues."*  
Fount of living water, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 7

Psalm 118

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

† *"Sufferings rekindle the fire of love."*  
Dawn of salvation, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 8 – SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, PATRONESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Psalm 98

Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous deeds.

† *"Trust totally in the Immaculata."*  
Virgin full of grace, pray for us.

• Today MI members may receive the gift of a plenary indulgence by fulfilling the customary conditions and renewing their consecration to the Immaculata.

#### DECEMBER 9

Psalm 147

Blessed are all who wait for the Lord.

† *"Work solely for God and in His presence."*  
Handmaid of the Lord, pray for us.

### SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

#### DECEMBER 10

Psalm 85

Lord, let us see Your kindness, and grant us Your salvation.

† *"The love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is above all things. He is everything for us."*  
Joy of Israel, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 11

Psalm 85

Our God will come to save us!

† *"That is the distinctive feature of Christians: we must love one another as brethren."*  
Glory of Jerusalem, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 12 – FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, PATRONESS OF THE AMERICAS AND OF THE UNBORN

Psalm (Judith 13)

You are the highest honor of our race.

† *"I can do all things in Him who strengthens you through the dear hands of the Immaculata... I can even become a saint. Courage, then, and go forward in patience and loving faith."*

Honor of our race, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 13

Psalm 103

O bless the Lord, my soul!

† *"The infallible measure of love toward God is the fulfillment of God's Will and surrender to His Most Holy Will."*

Servant, humble and poor, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 14

Psalm 145

The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger, and of great kindness.

† *"Industrious love toward your neighbor."*  
Blessed because you believed, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 15

Psalm 1

Those who follow You, Lord, will have the light of life.

† *"Be recollected in order to avoid occasions of sin."*  
Seat of Wisdom, pray for us.

#### DECEMBER 16

Psalm 80

Lord, make us turn to You; let us see Your face and we shall be saved.

† *"Avoid laziness, indolence. Practice small virtues and avoid small flaws."*  
Ark of the Covenant, pray for us.





## THIRD WEEK OF ADVENT

### DECEMBER 17

**Psalm (Luke 1)**

My soul rejoices in my God.

† *“During visits to the Blessed Sacrament, unite yourself to the sacrifice of the Holy Mass being celebrated all over the world.”*

Virgin overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 18

**Psalm 72**

Justice shall flourish in His time, and fullness of peace for ever.

† *“Reciprocate love with love. Appeal to Jesus more often through the Immaculata, especially with ejaculatory prayers.”*

Spouse of Joseph, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 19

**Psalm 71**

My mouth shall be filled with Your praise, and I will sing Your glory!

† *“Strive to the maximum to please Jesus and encourage others to do the same with the help of the Immaculata.”*

Mother prompt in the Visitation, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 20

**Psalm 24**

Let the Lord enter; He is the king of glory.

† *“Receive Jesus in Holy Communion and accept all things from His hands, with the humble disposition that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary had at the Annunciation.”*

Mother of the Son of David, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 21

**Psalm 33**

Exult, you just, in the Lord! Sing to Him a new song.

† *“Correct yourself now, have trust in the Immaculata. She will help you in all things. Start again continually.”*

Mother of the Lord, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 22

**Psalm (1 Samuel 2)**

My heart exults in the Lord, my Savior.

† *“Await the coming of Jesus by joining the waiting of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.”*

Woman of the New Covenant, pray for us.

### DECEMBER 23

**Psalm 25**

Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand.

† *“In zeal the following are indispensable: pure intention, prudence (gentleness, love) and good example.”*

Blessed among women, pray for us.

## FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

### DECEMBER 24

**Psalm 89**

For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

† *“Let Jesus live in you.”*

Mother of the Emmanuel, pray for us.



## DECEMBER 25 – THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD (CHRISTMAS)

“What did you think, O Immaculata, when for the first time you laid the Divine Child onto that little bed of hay? What feelings flooded your heart while you wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, held Him to your heart, and fed Him from your breasts? 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! Already at the time of the Annunciation, the Most Holy Trinity, by means of an angel, had clearly presented Its plan of redemption to you and had waited for an answer from you. At that moment, you had fully realized what you were giving your consent to, of Whom you were about to become a mother! There He is before you now, in the form of a weak newborn child. What feelings of humility, love and gratitude must have filled your heart at that time... as you marveled at the humility, love and gratitude that God incarnate had toward you. I beg you, fill my heart too with your humility, your love, your gratitude!”

--St. Maximilian M. Kolbe



# CHRISTMAS AND THE EUCHARIST

BY FR. JOHN HARDON, S.J.

**O**f the many subjects that we could talk about on Christmas day, I thought the most appropriate would be to speak on Christmas and the Eucharist. There are many aspects to their relationship, but I believe that there are mainly three: (1) both Christmas and the Eucharist are facts; (2) both reveal a mystery; and (3) both are meant to teach us a profound and not easily learned lesson. Christmas, first of all, is a fact of history. In a point of time and at a definable place the God of heaven and earth was born of a woman, and came to live among us as man. It is a fact that the infinite God became, unexplainably, a finite creature. It is a fact to which historians attest but which we know is no mere statistic of history; it is, rather, a fact planned by God from all eternity. This is the fact of Christmas: the Word actually became Flesh. What is the fact of the Eucharist? It is that the same Jesus Who was born on earth not only became man but remains man. He not only came into the world, He is in the world. In a word, He came to stay. The Eucharist is Christmas prolonged,

because faith tells us that once God became man, He decided to remain man. From all the reaches of past eternity, God had only been God. But having once taken on human flesh, into now the future reaches of eternity, God will always remain man. And this God-Man is here; Bethlehem is wherever there is a Catholic Church or chapel in which Christ is present. These are the two facts that we commemorate on Christmas day. But Christmas and the Eucharist are not only facts, they are also mysteries. What is the mystery of Christmas? The mystery is the humanly incredible reality of why God became man. He did not have to. God did not even have to make the world, and within the world, He did not have to make us. Except for the love of God, we are all empty unoccupied spaces on earth. But, having decided to make the world and to make us, God also decided that once man had sinned, He would redeem man. God might have redeemed man by an act of His divine Will; He chose not to do so. He chose, rather, to become man, so that as man He might not only, by some *fiat* of His human freedom redeem us, but might have a mortal flesh

and a soul capable of suffering. In a word, the mystery of Christmas is the mystery of God's love that chose to take on our human form in order to show His love for us by suffering. The only ultimate reason for Bethlehem is Jerusalem; the only reason in God's mind for becoming a Child was so that He might, as man, die on the Cross. In a word, the mystery of Christmas is the mystery of God's unfathomable love that wants to suffer. God took on human flesh so that He might be able to endure pain. That is the mystery of Christmas, the mystery of God's love, in order that loving, He might endure the Cross. What is the mystery of the Eucharist? It is the same. You would think that God's love would have been satisfied with His becoming man and as man living, suffering and dying for our sins. And having once died, rising from the dead and returning as man to the Father from whom He came. But no, the mystery of God's love is that He invented a way of showing His love for us not only by being with us and near us but God even invented a way of being inside of us. All of this tells us a lot about what love means. Love wants to show

“  
The Eucharist is Christmas prolonged. Bethlehem is wherever there is a Catholic church in which Christ is present.”

that it loves. It is not satisfied with sentiments or words. Love wants to prove its love in deeds; better, it wants to show its love in pain. Love wants to be near the one it loves, to be united with the one it loves. All of this is hidden behind the mystery of the Eucharist, made possible by the mystery of Christmas, because these two mysteries are really one. The Eucharist is merely an extension, a continuation, of what happened 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. Because Mary gave birth to the Son of God, we now have the Flesh of the Son of God near us, with us, and when we receive Him in Communion, within us. Finally, what is the lesson? The lesson of Christmas and the Eucharist must be obvious by now. God does nothing in vain. He did not choose to become man nor does He remain man in our midst except that He wants to evoke from us something of the same kind of love that He showed during His life on earth and still shows us in His life in the Eucharist. Jesus Christ gives us His Flesh and Blood to adore, worship and nourish our souls on, so that we might live with His life. What He wants us to do therefore, and this is the lesson, is

to love Him as He has been loving us. How has He been loving us? First of all, He loves us in simplicity. Is there anything more simple than a child, or anything more simple than the round wafer of the Eucharist? God wants us to love Him in simplicity. Above all, we must have no duplicity with God. He wants our whole heart, not just part of it. We are to love Him, therefore, simply, unqualifyingly, totally. God wants us to love Him humbly. Is there anything more lowly than a baby? They are speechless, helpless; they must be fed and carried from place to place. And is there anything more unpretentious than what seems to be a piece of bread and a sip of wine? Yet as we know, real humility is always greatness hiding itself out of love. What a hard lesson for us to learn, to love this God of ours humbly. We are to love God and, allowing Him to do with us as He pleases, we are to love God obediently. When God came into the world, He came as Scripture tells us, obedient first of all to His Father's Will; then, as a Child and through His growing manhood, He was obedient to His mother Mary and to Joseph. In the Eucharist, too, He is totally submissive. The moment a duly ordained priest pronounces the words of Consecration, Jesus Christ comes down on the altar, He obeys. This is our faith. And perhaps this is the hardest lesson to learn, to love God obediently. It means, as we know, obeying God not only interiorly or according to our own understanding or interpretation of God's Will, it means obeying God as that divine Will is explained and interpreted for us by His very fallible and weak human creatures. These are the lessons that God wants us to learn from Christmas as a historical event and from Christmas as a perennial reality because, as you see, the Eucharist is Christmas. Believing in Christ's Real Presence, we have the grave responsibility of invoking, in faith, this Jesus, begging Him, pleading

with Him that He might grant those graces—if need be, miraculous graces—that the sinful world He came to redeem so desperately needs. Jesus redeemed the world, but it is not redeemed unless we cooperate with His grace. And we must cooperate with His grace not only for ourselves, but for the whole world, so that Jesus' coming into the world will not, for any soul, have been in vain.  
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## Eucharistic Revival Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the gift of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who promised to stay with us always, until the end of the age.

Reawaken our wonder at His presence in the Most Holy Eucharist.

May our hearts burn within us as He opens the Scriptures and breaks the Bread.

Give us the eyes of faith to recognize His presence in our brothers and sisters, especially in the face of the poor and the suffering.

Nourished by the Eucharist, send us forth to walk faithfully as missionary disciples, proclaiming the Gospel to every heart and extending Your kingdom to every land.

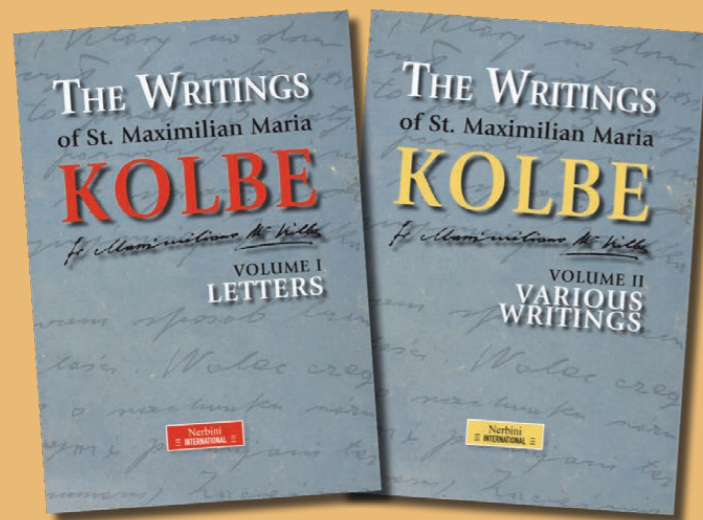
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

by Most Reverend José H. Gomez  
Archbishop of Los Angeles



## The Definitive English Edition!

The Martyr of Charity, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894-1941), before his death in the Auschwitz concentration camp, had spent the previous twenty-three years as a priest, evangelizer, media mogul, social commentator, missionary and religious reformer. His life's work cut short at age 47, St. Kolbe nonetheless left behind an impressive body of writings. In the 1950s the English-speaking world first began reading bits and pieces of those writings translated from the original Polish, Italian and Latin. The publication of the first English critical edition, *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe*, constitutes a historic event for the English-speaking readership. The sublime inspiration of the Saint's Marian thought and spirituality transpires from every page of his writings, whether it be a treatise on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Conception, an evangelization plan, a message of counsel to religious and laity, or a filial letter to his mother. His deep personal relationship with the Immaculate Virgin Mary colors and enflames nearly every page. His leitmotif is love for God, the Church, the world and all its peoples. His goal is the conversion and sanctification of that world.



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*Because the frenetic pace of St. Kolbe's active ministry afforded him no time to compose a theological Summa, this edition assembles together the wide scope of his extant writings into a unified synthesis. It represents a virtual magnum opus of Kolbean thought-- at one and the same time pastoral, anthropological, philosophical, spiritual, ascetical and mystical. In the person of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, the first half of the twentieth century found a fresh voice fearlessly defending timeless values in the contemporary context. These two volumes give vigorous new life to this prophetic voice of truth.*

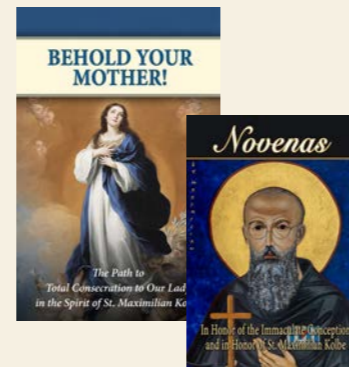
— Fr. James McCurry, OFM Conv.

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# THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

It envelops all our hearts and beings. It changes us, if only for a brief time. It brings about that inner peace our souls long for. With so many wars going on, I pray that those soldiers on both sides may find their inner peace if only for a brief night, that peace God instilled in our hearts and difficult to find within us.

Yes, Christmas is a very special time for me. I have seen those God-forsaken places where peace and love are difficult to find. I have wished for a cease-fire, if for only the night of Christmas. I have been in those places praying to God for peace and love where only hatred abounds. There is something about the Spirit of Christmas that dwells in one's heart, on that special night, even if it's only a short time. We must join our Blessed Mother in praying for all those lost souls, praying that all hate, envy, and pride, will be washed away if only for one night, Christmas night, the night of our Savior's birth. That is the special night when the Holy Spirit triumphs in the hearts of men.

May it be a night of Joy, Peace, and Love. I pray we may see the spirit of Heaven open in the hearts of man. Let's join forces with Mary and help her bring peace and love to all mankind. I pray this Christmas that all the Knights of the Immaculata will join me in support of our Blessed Mother for peace and love in this world - if only for that brief holy night.

I want to wish all our Knights and friends a very special Merry Christmas. United may we bring about peace and love in this world. Let us work together to carry out the will of the Immaculata - not our will but the will of our Blessed Mother, the one who always does the will of Jesus Christ. I pray that the New Year brings you the peace and prosperity you so desire in your hearts.

**Merry Christmas!**

Ronald L. Rodrigues  
MI National President

"I see Mary everywhere and difficulties nowhere."  
-St. Maximilian Kolbe



# ST. MAXIMILIAN WRITES...

EXCERPTS FROM A LETTER TO HIS FELLOW FRANCISCANS ON DEVOTION TO THE IMMACULATA (KW 603).

**M**y Dear Brothers (Fathers, Brothers, Clerics and non-Clerics), ... I have been meaning to write something for a while, but this blessed time goes by terribly quickly here. It flies. I especially want to thank you for your prayers, because while the need and effectiveness of prayer are felt everywhere, it is even more so in the missions. The feast of the name day of the Immaculata is fast approaching, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. When will she take over the world?... When will her Niepokalanow and her "Knight" be established in every nation, written in each language, and reach every home, every palace, every hovel?... When will her medal be worn on every chest, and every heart that beats on the globe beat for her?... I am

of the opinion that there is no better way to hasten that blessed moment, than for each of us to devote *ourselves* every day to enhancing in ourselves our consecration to the Immaculata. In fact, the more perfectly we belong to her, the more freely she will be able to direct us herself. No more effective action could ever be conceived. The brothers of Niepokalanow have asked me various questions about the devotion to the Immaculata in relation to other devotions. Also, not long ago I received a letter from a cleric (who does not live at Niepokalanow) in which I am asked how one can in practice balance the thought of the loving presence of God in us with the thought of the Immaculata. Undoubtedly, imagination tends to conceive God the Father, Jesus, the Immaculata, and so on, as distinct objects of as many

“**The more one belongs to the Immaculata, the more openly and freely one can approach the wounds of the Savior, the Eucharist, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and God the Father.**”

devotions, as if they were on the same plane, instead of seeing them as links in a single chain, subordinated to each other as different means to one end: One God in the Most Holy Trinity. I will answer by saying that the more one belongs to the Immaculata, the more openly and freely one can approach the wounds of the Savior, the Eucharist, the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and God the Father. In addition, I will say that we need not have the Immaculata in mind at that exact time, because the *essence* of union with her does not consist in thought, memory or feeling, but in will. Sometimes I grow annoyed when, while reading, I realize that excessive emphasis is placed on the notion that the Divine Mother is all our hope “*after Jesus*.” Obviously, that cannot be understood literally. In fact, I think the exaggerated concern not to

omit that clause—surely a sign of reverence for Jesus—quite offensive toward Him... How little is still known about the Immaculata in theory and even less in practice! How many preconceptions, misunderstandings, difficulties agitate minds! May the Immaculata enable her Niepokalanow to shed light on such darkness, to dispel these cold fogs and revive, rekindle love to-

ward herself *without limitation* with full freedom, without those vain fears that hamper and chill hearts! So that we may start looking for the King not near this palace, but *within* it, inside, in its inner rooms. I am getting to the end of the sheet and time is running out, so I end by asking for many, many prayers. Yours,  
Br. Maximilian M. Kolbe



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*Maximilian M. Kolbe*



# Our National Emmaus Moment



## Jesus Is Coming to YOU

Shortly after his Resurrection, Jesus accompanied two disciples on their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus—walking with them in their grief, offering hope, and finally revealing himself through the breaking of the bread. Jesus wants to do the same for YOU!

This will be one of the largest Eucharistic pilgrimages in history. Just as throngs followed Christ throughout his earthly ministry, our nation will process with our Eucharistic Lord through cities, along highways, and past rural towns on his way to the 10th National Eucharistic Congress.

### Pilgrimage Information

Come meet Jesus as he comes close to you!

please visit: <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org/pilgrimage> for updates and information on the Pilgrimage and other initiatives associated with the National Eucharistic Congress.

### Junipero Serra Route

**STARTING LOCATION:** SAN FRANCISCO, CA

From our Pacific coast, the western arm of the Pilgrimage will cross the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains on foot. Named after the "Apostle of California," this will be the longest and most challenging route—covering over 2,200 miles!

**SOME STOPS ALONG THE WAY**

- Diocese of Salt Lake City
- Archdiocese of Denver
- Archdiocese of Omaha
- Archdiocese of Kansas City-KS
- Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph
- Archdiocese of St. Louis

### Marian Route

**STARTING LOCATION:** MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS, LAKE ITASCA, MN

Departing from the headwaters of the Mississippi, the northern arm of the Pilgrimage will descend through the midwestern United States, pass through Wisconsin and Illinois, and meet up with the other three pilgrimage routes at the Congress in Indianapolis. The route is named for its visit to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, the first and only approved Marian Apparition site in the United States.

**SOME STOPS ALONG THE WAY**

- Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
- The National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help
- Archdiocese of Milwaukee
- Archdiocese of Chicago
- Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

### Elizabeth Ann Seton Route

**STARTING LOCATION:** NEW HAVEN, CT

The eastern arm of the Pilgrimage will begin near the Atlantic coast, journey through our nation's oldest diocese, and cross the Appalachian Mountains. The route is named after St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born saint to be canonized by the Catholic Church.

**SOME STOPS ALONG THE WAY**

- Archdiocese of New York
- Archdiocese of Philadelphia
- Archdiocese of Baltimore
- Archdiocese of Washington
- Diocese of Steubenville
- Archdiocese of Cincinnati

### 10th National Eucharistic Congress

**LOCATION:** INDIANAPOLIS, IN

The four branches of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will converge at the venue in a powerful symbol of unity. Then—gathered as one Church—we will present our wounded and imperfect hearts to the triune God who loves us. Just as he did on the road to Emmaus, Our Lord will listen to our troubles and reveal himself once more in the breaking of the bread.

### Juan Diego Route

**STARTING LOCATION:** BROWNSVILLE, TX

The southern arm of the Pilgrimage will depart from the tip of Texas, wind around the Gulf of Mexico, and pass through the southeastern region of the United States on its way to Indianapolis. This route is named for St. Juan Diego, whose vision of Our Lady had a massive impact on the spiritual character of North America. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the official Patroness of the Eucharistic Revival.

**SOME STOPS ALONG THE WAY**

- Diocese of Corpus Christi
- Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
- Archdiocese of New Orleans
- Archdiocese of Mobile
- Archdiocese of Atlanta
- Diocese of Nashville



**July 17-21, 2024**

Indianapolis, IN

Please visit: <https://www.eucharisticcongress.org> for updates and special offers for families with children.





This year, the monthly reflections provided by the MI International Office on the 2023 MI Intentions include:

- \*A Scripture reading.
- \*A text from St. Maximilian Kolbe's Writings.
- \*A brief commentary by Fr. Sidifredo De La Cruz, OFM Conv., Colombia.

### December O Immaculata, please intercede...

*That we may learn from you,  
Our Lady of silence and hope,  
to wait for the birth of the Divine  
Child, the Light who illuminates  
the darkness of the world and gives  
peace to our hearts.*

**Luke 2:6-7** - While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**KW 1236** - What did you think, O Immaculata, when for the first time you laid the Divine Child onto that little bed of hay? What feelings flooded your heart while you wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, held Him to your heart....?... What feelings of humility, love and gratitude must have filled your heart

at that time as you marveled at the humility, love and gratitude that God incarnate had toward you.

**Reflection** - The Nativity of our Savior is "the feast of all feasts," according to St. Francis. The humility of the Divine Child illumines the entire history of mankind and reveals the greatness of God's plan for us, His children. The Nativity of Our Lord reminds us, Knights of the Immaculata, that we are called to "be mothers of our Savior" carrying Him in our hearts and bodies with a pure and sincere conscience, and giving Him birth by means of good works of charity, as St. Francis reminds us.

The joy of Christmas should stir in each MI member the fire of divine love. This feast of Light ought to make us bearers of light as we go forth to share with others the maternal love of our Immaculate Mother. May this Advent and Christmas be a fitting time for reaching out in friendship to people who are suffering in body and spirit; a time for letting go of resentments and for reconciliation of broken relationships. As we wish "Merry Christmas" to one another, let us pray that each person may encounter the Incarnate Son of God this Christmas!

**Prayer** - Act of Total Consecration to the Immaculata.

## 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.

# MI Resources

Available from the MI National Center



Disseminate the Miraculous Medal and introduce Our Lady and the MI to others!

Miraculous Medals and various MI resources can be requested from the MI National Office  
via email: [MINational@MissionImmaculata.com](mailto:MINational@MissionImmaculata.com)



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Check the MI website  
[MilitiaoftheImmaculata.com](http://MilitiaoftheImmaculata.com)  
often for updates and follow us on



Support Our Lady's Work  
by Helping the MI  
**DONATE HERE**

*"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



Want to connect and pray with other MI members? Looking for support in deepening or preparing for your consecration? Join an MI Village and live out your consecration with others. For information about an MI Village in your area, email the MI National Center. For *online MI Villages*, email the Moderators listed below.

\*\*Moderator: Scott Richard

Email: [Virtual.MI.Village@gmail.com](mailto:Virtual.MI.Village@gmail.com)  
Mtg Day: Friday (Last Friday of each month)  
Mtg Time: 8:00pm CST

Weekly Consecration Renewal & Virtual Village Rosary Tuesdays @ 8:30pm CST

\*\*Moderator: Douglas Eschbach

Email: [MI.village.marytown@gmail.com](mailto:MI.village.marytown@gmail.com)  
Mtg Day: Sunday (3rd Sunday of each month)  
Mtg Time: 5:00pm CST

\*\*Moderator: Donna

Knights at the Foot of the Cross (KFC)  
Village of the Immaculata  
E-mail: [miutah.stmary@gmail.com](mailto:miutah.stmary@gmail.com)  
Mtg Day: Every Friday evening  
Mtg Time: 8:00pm-9:00pm MST

\*\*Moderator: Bill Bielawski

Email: [william.bielawski@gmail.com](mailto:william.bielawski@gmail.com)  
Mtg Day: Sunday (3rd Sunday of each month)  
Mtg Time: 7:00pm CST

\*\* Moderator: Lisa Fulgenzi

Email: [drlisafmi@gmail.com](mailto:drlisafmi@gmail.com)  
Write to request Google Meet join info  
Mtg Day: Monday  
Mtg Time: 12:00 - 1:00 pm EST