

THE KNIGHT OF THE  
*Immaculata*  
E-PUBLICATION OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA, USA



**MARY AND JOSEPH PRESENT THE SAVIOR**  
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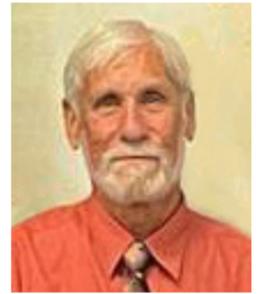
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# A MONTH OF GRACE

by Ronald L. Rodrigues, MI National President



**D**ear Knights of the Immaculata, Maria! As we enter February there are many opportunities the church gives us to honor and venerate our Blessed Mother, and worship Jesus Christ. We begin the month with the feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2. Here we recall the purification of Mary and the presentation of the child Jesus to God in the temple. On February 11th we celebrate our Lady as she presented herself to St. Bernadette in Lourdes, France in 1858. The feast of our Lady of Lourdes was approved by Pope Leo XIII in 1890. On November 13, 1907, Pope St. Pius X proclaimed that the feast be observed throughout the universal Church.

As Knights of the Immaculata let us recall the suffering that our founder, St. Maximilian Kolbe endured when he was arrested on February 17, 1941, and ultimately sent to the Auschwitz concentration camp. He showed us the epitome of what the three pillars of Lent (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) are. After Maximilian had been beaten badly and taken to the infirmary, the prison doctor, Dr. Rudolf Diem, seeing the severity of his injuries, attempted to move him to the front of the line, where 200 prisoners were waiting for care. St. Maximilian Kolbe refused and said there were others that needed care more than he did. He endured extreme suffering but despite this he never lost his faith. Even after enduring the hardships of Auschwitz, he was able to explain to Dr. Rudolf Diem, a Polish Protestant doctor, who had said he has lost faith in God after

seeing the horrors of Auschwitz, that God was still alive and said: "I'll pray that God and his Holy Mother will bring you back to faith."

St. Maximilian Kolbe always put others first. He prayed continuously and led others in prayer until His last day. He gave his food to others even when he needed the nourishment to survive. He saved the little bread he received to use it for Communion, to bring the Body of Christ to others. While at Niepokalanow, and even during his short time in the concentration camp, he gave everything he had to others. St. Maximilian encouraged Henryk Sienkiewicz while enduring hard labor in Auschwitz: "Let's offer our suffering to the Immaculata so our tormentors know we are her witnesses." Fr. Kolbe had said once: "For Jesus I am prepared to suffer still more."

On February 22 we celebrate Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of Lent and reminds us of our mortality and the need for penance and reconciliation with God. The ashes we receive on Ash Wednesday represent both death and repentance for our sins. We observe fasting and abstinence and focus our thoughts on our Savior Jesus Christ who died for us. The 40 days of Lent represent the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fending off the temptation of the devil. During His time in the desert, Satan tempted Jesus three times. Each temptation is related to one of the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The first temptation highlights our need for food. After fasting for 40 days in the desert, Jesus would be weak and hungry. Satan said, "If you are

the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves of bread" (Mt 4:3). Jesus replied, "It is written, one does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4). During Lent, Jesus asks us to resist earthly temptations and accept the spiritual food provided by God.

In the second temptation, Satan tried to weaken Jesus' spirit. He took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down" (cf. Mt 4:6). Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, you shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test" (Mt 4:7). Satan tempts us the same way. He leads us to contemplate a sin and tries to encourage us to commit that sin. If we sin, we expect God to rescue us from the consequences. We should try



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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)

to avoid sin. Prayer strengthens us and helps us from falling into sin. Prayer should be our focus during Lent. We shouldn't try to avoid temptations on our own.

We need to pray for help to overcome our weaknesses. The third temptation is about our pride, power, and greed. Satan gives Jesus a vision of the world's kingdoms and said to Him, "All these I shall give to you if you will prostrate yourself and worship me" (Mt 4:9). Jesus said to him, "Get away Satan, it is written, the Lord your God shall you worship and him alone shall you serve" (Mt 4:10).

We can fall into the trap of wanting pleasure and power. But here we need to be reminded of what we really want: Is it a life on earth with power or riches or eternal life with God in heaven?

Almsgiving is giving our time, talent, and treasure. It's through charity that we learn to become more humble. Humility helps us resist compromising our relationship with our Heavenly Father. Is it not better to resist earthly pleasures and seek the Kingdom of God?

Let us ask Mary, our Blessed Mother, to help us this Lent overcome the daily temptations and focus our attention on the things that really matter. She will lead us to Jesus and has promised to intercede for us. She can't present anything impure to the Father, and therefore takes our ugliness and makes it beautiful. Renew your consecration and let Mary take control of your life and lead you to the Father.

Ronald L. Rodrigues  
MI National President  
"I see Mary everywhere and difficulties nowhere." St. Maximilian Kolbe



# A FORMULA FOR LENT

by Fr. William T. Miller

**T**he Church guides our Lenten journey by directing us on a path of prayer, self denial and self giving. A formula that I find helpful to develop those three areas of our spiritual life is the saying of what a bride should bring to her wedding: something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.

**Something old** - Stay with what has worked for you in past Lents. There are certain prayers and hymns I look forward to during this season. There are things I give up every Lent that are a genuine sacrifice. There are areas of personal generosity that I always need to come back to.

**Something new** - At the same time it's good to have something to freshen up our Lent. It may be a new book or an online daily devotional or a different version of the Stations of the Cross. Perhaps your examination of conscience is showing up a need for greater self discipline in an area of life that you have not typically tackled in the past, like the use of one's phone or other devices.

**Something borrowed** - This is a season of conversion for we are ever in need of a change of mind and heart. What an attitude adjustment we would have if we realized that all we have, including the breath of life, is borrowed from God. In what ways can I practice being less possessive and more detached this Lent?

**Something blue** - The color blue is a symbol of Our Lady. She needs to be part of our Lent for no one understands better what Jesus suffered for us and no one has embraced the Mystery of the Cross like she did. She wants to help us to pray more and to pray better. She is our Mother who knows how to lead us out of ourselves and how to let go of what keeps us from loving God and loving others.

May we all have a very "blue" Lent. For if we do, the old, the new and the borrowed will all beautifully come together.

\* Fr. William T. Miller, MI member, serves as the Rector of the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception in Peoria, Illinois, and the Pastor of the Heart of Peoria parishes.

# MARY AND JOSEPH PRESENT THE SAVIOR

## FROM THE MARIAN CATECHESSES OF POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

In the episode of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple, St. Luke emphasizes Jesus' messianic destiny. The immediate purpose of the Holy Family's journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem according to the Lucan text was to fulfil the law: "And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord'), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons'" (Lk 2:22-24). With this act, Mary and Joseph show their intention of faithfully obeying God's will, rejecting every kind of privilege. Their coming to the temple in Jerusalem has the significance of a consecration to God in the place where He is present. Obligated by her poverty to offer turtledoves or pigeons, Mary in fact gives the true Lamb who would redeem humanity, thus anticipating what was prefigured in the ritual offerings of the old law.

### SIMEON WAS INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

While the law required the purification after birth of the mother alone, Luke speaks of the "time for their purification" (2:22), intending perhaps to indicate together the prescriptions involving both the mother and the firstborn Son.

The term "purification" can surprise us, because it is referred to a Mother who had been granted, by a singular grace, to be immaculate from the first moment of her existence, and to a Child who was totally holy.

However, it must be remembered that it was not a question of purifying the conscience from some stain of sin, but only of reacquiring ritual purity which, according to the ideas of the time, may be harmed by the simple fact of birth without there being any form of guilt.

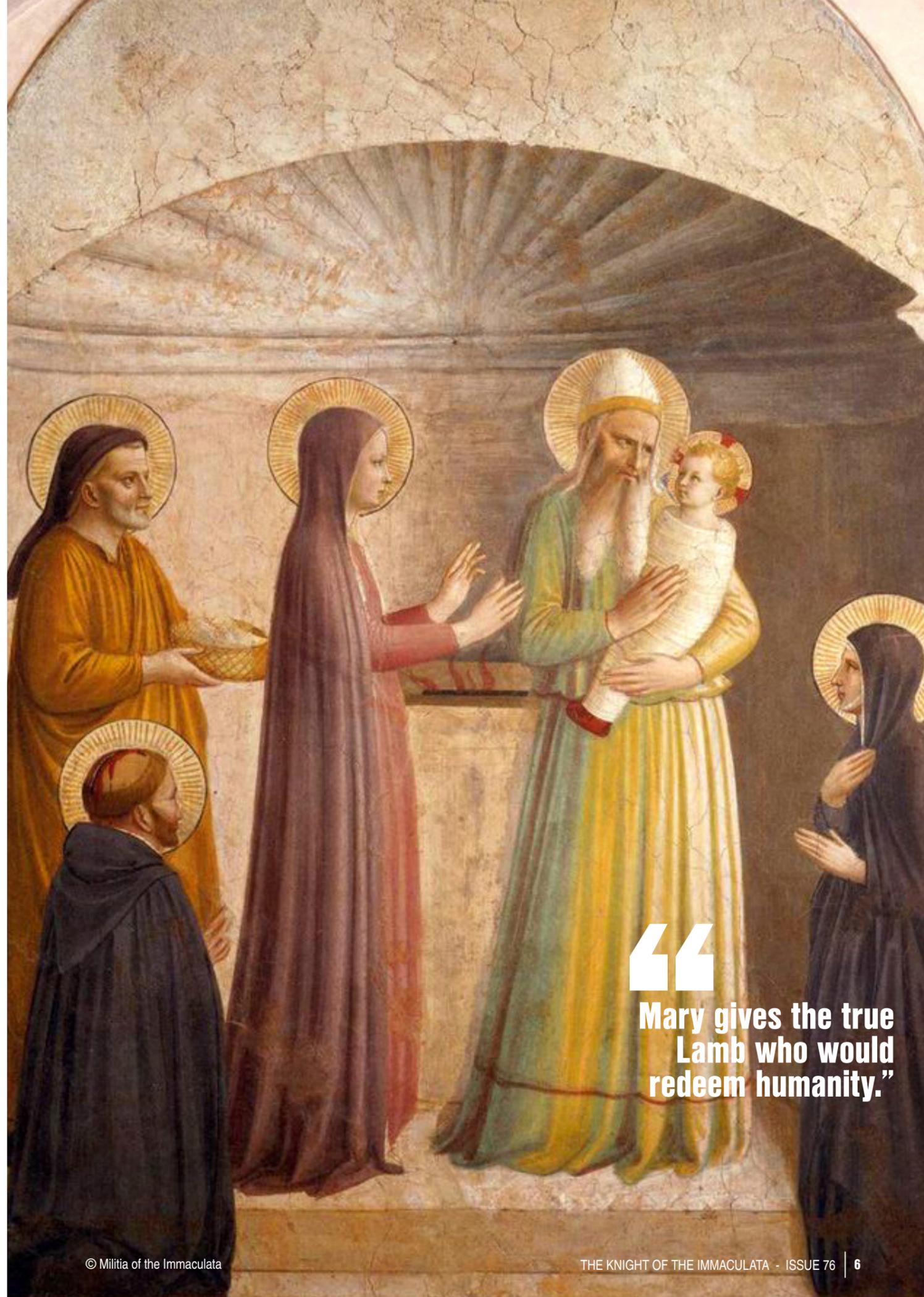
The Evangelist uses the occasion to

stress the special link existing between Jesus, as "first-born" (Lk 2:7, 23) and God's holiness, as well as to indicate the spirit of humble offering which motivated Mary and Joseph (cf. Lk 2:24). In fact, the "two turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Lv 12:8), was the offering of the poor.

In the temple, Joseph and Mary meet Simeon, "righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25).

The Lucan narrative says nothing of his past or of the service he carried out in the temple; it tells of a deeply religious man who nurtures great desires in his heart and awaits the Messiah, the consolation of Israel. In fact, "the Holy Spirit was upon him" and "it had been revealed to him ... that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Lk 2:25-26). Simeon invites us to look at the merciful action of God who pours out the Spirit on His faithful to bring to fulfilment His mysterious project of love.

Simeon, a man who is open to God's action, "inspired by the Spirit" (Lk 2:27), goes to the temple where he meets Jesus, Joseph and Mary. Taking



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the Child in his arms, he blesses God and says, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word" (Lk 2:29). Simeon uses an Old Testament phrase to express the joy he experiences on meeting the Messiah and feels that the purpose of his life has been fulfilled; he can therefore ask the Most High to let him depart in peace to the next world.

## PRESENTING THE SAVIOR OF ALL MANKIND

In the episode of the Presentation we can glimpse the meeting of Israel's hope with the Messiah. We can also see in it a prophetic sign of man's encounter with Christ. The Holy Spirit makes it possible by awakening in the human heart the desire for this salvific meeting and by bringing it about. Nor can we neglect the role of Mary who gives the Child to the holy old man Simeon. By divine will, it is the Mother who gives Jesus to mankind. In revealing the Savior's future, Simeon refers to the prophecy of the "Servant" sent to the chosen people and to the nations. To him the Lord says, "I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations" (Is42:6). And again: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Is 49:6). In his canticle, Simeon reverses the perspective and puts the stress on the universality of Jesus' mission: "For my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory for your people Israel" (Lk 2:30-32). How can we fail to marvel at these words? "And his father and mother marveled at what was said about him" (Lk 2:33). But this experience enabled

Joseph and Mary to understand more clearly the importance of their act of offering: in the temple of Jerusalem they present the One who, being the glory of His people, is also the salvation of all mankind.

Pope St. John Paul II  
General Audience, December 11, 1996

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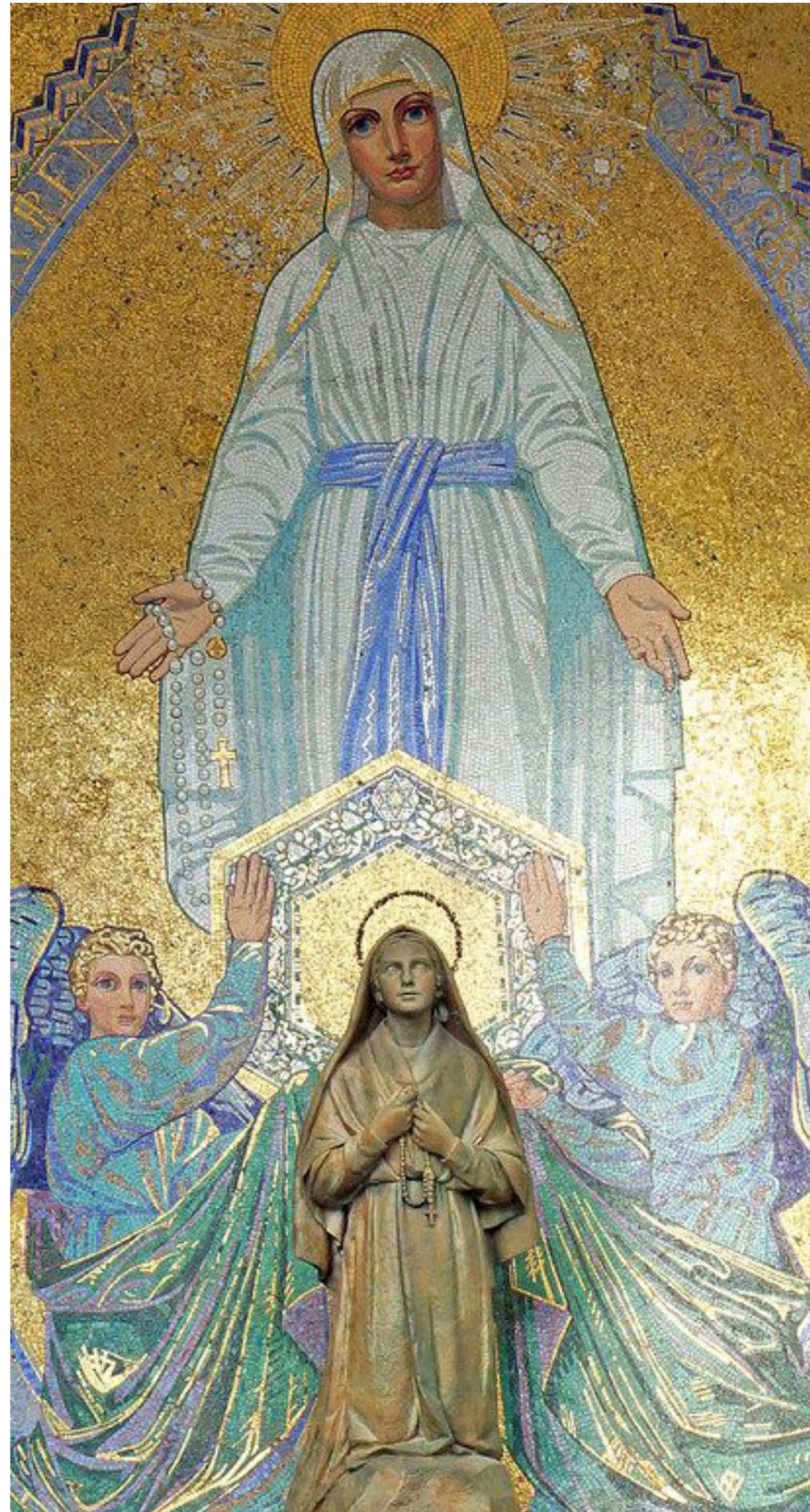
# OUR LADY OF LOURDES AND ST. BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS

BY RONALD L. RODRIGUES



**St. Bernadette was one of St. Maximilian Kolbe's special Saints, one of his three benefactors. He had a special devotion to her for a couple of reasons."**

**O**n February 11 we celebrate Our Lady as she had presented herself to St. Bernadette in 1858 in Lourdes. This feast is closely connected to that of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception that had been declared a dogma of the church on December 8, 1854, by Pope Pius IX. St. Bernadette was one of St. Maximilian Kolbe's special Saints, one of his three benefactors. He had a special devotion to her for a couple of reasons. The first most obvious is the trust our Blessed Mother put in her as she revealed who she is. Mary appeared to St. Bernadette on 18 different occasions but on March 25, 1858, St. Bernadette asked her what her name was. She told her she was the Immaculate Conception. The second less known was in March 1914. While a seminarian in Rome, Maximilian Kolbe had a serious infection on his right thumb. Two doctors examined him and told him they would need to amputate the thumb to prevent the infection from spreading to the hand. They told him there was no other remedy. Maximilian thought to himself that this would preclude him from being ordained a priest, for the priest may touch the sacred Host with thumb and forefinger only. He would be unable to distribute the Body of Our Lord. Father Luigi Bondini, the rector of his school, told Maximilian that when he was twelve his foot became infected and the doctors said it would have to



be amputated: "My mother bathed my foot in water from the Lourdes grotto, and my foot was healed." Maximilian thought he would invoke the Virgin of Lourdes and bathe his thumb in the water from her grotto. The amputation was postponed and the physicians also applied compresses of Lourdes water to Maximilian's thumb. His thumb was healed. Dr. Messina said to Maximilian: "I've no scientific evidence that the water from Lourdes healed your thumb. Perhaps yours is a case like that of the hemorrhaging woman who came to Christ and touched only His garment or like that of the blind beggar pleading for sight. Remember Christ's words to them: 'Thy faith hath made thee whole' (Lk 8:48; 18:42)." Maximilian attributed his healing to the Virgin of Lourdes and the healing waters. [Cf. *Mary's Knight*, pp. 106-108, by Claude Foster]. Lourdes in 1858 was an inconspicuous little French town on the Gave de Pau River at the foot of the Pyrenees, with around 4,000 inhabitants. One of them was François Soubirous (1807-1871), a miller who had fallen on hard times. He and his wife Louise (nee Casterot) (1825-1866), a laundress, had nine children. Three died at or shortly after child birth. The eldest was their daughter Marie-Bernarde, known as Bernadette. Bernadette was born on January 7, 1844, in Lourdes, and baptized at the local parish church, St. Pierre's, on January 9, her parents' wedding anniversary. She grew up in a home that wasn't very pleasant because her family was extremely poor. The family lived squashed into one unheated small room. However, she had a happy childhood because of her parents' love for her. Bernadette contracted cholera as a toddler and suffered severe asthma for the rest of her life. She spent part of her childhood brought up by an aunt, had little in the way of schooling and was unable to read or write as she wasn't able to attend school on account of having to help her aunt and family. At 14 years of age, she made her First Communion

on June 3, 1858. She was the eldest daughter, so she was put in charge of her brothers and sisters while her parents worked. On February 11, 1858, Bernadette was out collecting firewood and she heard the sound of two gusts of wind, but the trees and bushes nearby did not move. From the darkness of the alcove came a "dazzling light, and a white figure." In the words of St. Bernadette, "I raised my head and looked towards the grotto. I saw a Lady dressed in white, wearing a white dress, a blue girdle and a yellow rose on each foot, the same color as the chain of her Rosary." Bernadette tried to keep this a secret. She was the only person to actually see her, but her sister Toinette told her mother, and the children received punishment for their story. That day Marie-Bernarde Soubirous saw the first of her 18 "visions" in Lourdes. Soon the news spread all around, and on subsequent visits the Lady asked for a chapel to be built on the grounds, for Bernadette to pray for the conversion of sinners, and for her to drink the spring water that was revealed to her at the grotto. Word of these apparitions spread rapidly and caused quite a stir in town. In response, Bernadette was detained, interrogated, and harassed by the civil authorities as if she were a common criminal. The villagers, however, came to her rescue and demanded that the child be released. Bernadette was ordered by her parents to never go there again. The local government was threatened by the report and had the area fenced off and issued stiff penalties for anybody trying to get near it. Bernadette visited the barricaded grotto under the cover of darkness, and on March 25, the Lady appeared. "With her two arms hanging down, she raised her eyes and looked up at the sky, and it was then that she told me, joining her hands together now at the height of her breast, that she was the Immaculate Conception. Those were the last words she ever said to me."

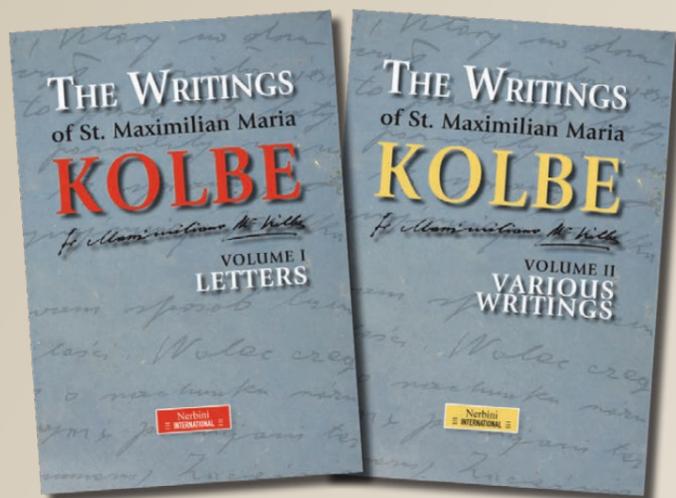


**O**n Easter Sunday, April 7, Bernadette visited the grotto and was observed to have held her hands over a lit candle without harm, and on July 16, she visited the grotto for the last time saying, "I have never seen her so beautiful before." Lourdes became a national issue in France, resulting in Emperor Napoleon III to reopen the grotto on October 4, 1858. The spring where Bernadette was asked to dig began to flow. People began to believe the water had special healing powers. As word spread, the water was given to medical patients, and many reports of miraculous cures followed. Many cures were "certified miracles" lacking any medical explanations. The first cure was reported in 1858 and in 1861 a commission of enquiry pronounced fifteen of a hundred reported cures to be miraculous. People still visit the spring today in the hope that it will heal and cure them. Bernadette always believed that faith and prayer cured the sick. Maximilian Kolbe was cured from the waters of Lourdes and based his entire life on the truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception, confirmed by her revelation to St. Bernadette. At Lourdes the Immaculata did not say that she had been conceived immaculately but said: "I am the Immaculate Conception." This points to the fact she was conceived without sin but also that the privilege belongs to her. It is not accidental but belongs to her very nature. She is the Immaculate Conception in person, that is what sets her apart from all other children of Adam. St. Maximilian only made one visit to Lourdes on January 30, 1930, to ask for Mary's blessing before traveling to the Far East. St. Maximilian's goal was to make the Immaculata known and loved. Four years after Our Lady of Lourdes appeared to St. Bernadette, the local bishop ruled that the apparitions

were authentic. The Church being faced with nationwide questions, decided to institute an investigative commission in 1858. In January 1860 the local Bishop finally declared that, "The Virgin Mary did appear indeed to Bernadette Soubirous." On January 18, 1862, Bishop Laurence, the Bishop of Tarbes, gave a solemn Declaration, "We are inspired by the Commission comprising wise, holy, learned and experienced priests who questioned the child, studied the facts, examined everything and weighed all the evidence. We have also called on science, and we remain convinced that the Apparitions are supernatural and divine, and that by consequence, what Bernadette saw was the Most Blessed Virgin. Our convictions are based on the testimony of Bernadette, but above all on the things that have happened, things which can be nothing other than divine intervention." In February 1876, Pope Pius IX issued a Decree of Canonical Coronation to the Image as Notre-Dame du Saint Rosaire, Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes, Lourdes, France, and in 1863, Joseph Fabisch was charged to create a statue of the Virgin Mary according to Bernadette's description. It was presented and placed in the grotto on April 4, 1864, with 20,000 pilgrims present. St. Bernadette decided that she wanted to devote her life to God and eventually entered a religious house, a convent in Nevers, where she continued to suffer physically, uniting her suffering to Christ, and died at an early age. She died on April 16, 1879, at the age of 35. She was found incorrupt on three occasions. Bernadette's body was exhumed in 1909 and was found "incorrupt." Reburied in a new casket, she was exhumed again in 1919 and the body was still well preserved, though the face was slightly discolored. She was exhumed yet again in 1925 and reburied in the Chapel of

St. Bernadette in the Sisters of Charity convent which is visited by huge numbers of pilgrims. Napoleon III's wife helped her achieve her vision to build a church at the cave and today a beautiful church has been erected on the grounds near the grotto at Lourdes. After Rome and the Holy Land, Lourdes is the most popular place of pilgrimage for Catholic faithful. The water of Lourdes is readily available to all pilgrims, and numerous healings have been medically documented to have occurred there, as well as conversions to the faith because of these miracles. The events established the Marian veneration in Lourdes, which together with Fatima is the most visited Marian Shrine in the world, with 4-6 million pilgrims visiting annually.

**“  
Maximilian  
Kolbe was cured  
from the waters  
of Lourdes and  
based his entire  
life on the truth of  
Mary's Immaculate  
Conception,  
confirmed by her  
revelation to  
St. Bernadette.”**



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— Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, OFM Conv.

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# PILGRIMAGE TO THE BASILICA OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE: MAY 8-13, 2023

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The mission of the Militia of the Immaculata is to bring every heart to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through Marian consecration, which calls us to evangelize the world under the direction of Our Lady. Join us to renew your faith and rekindle your mission.

**Date:** May 8-13, 2023

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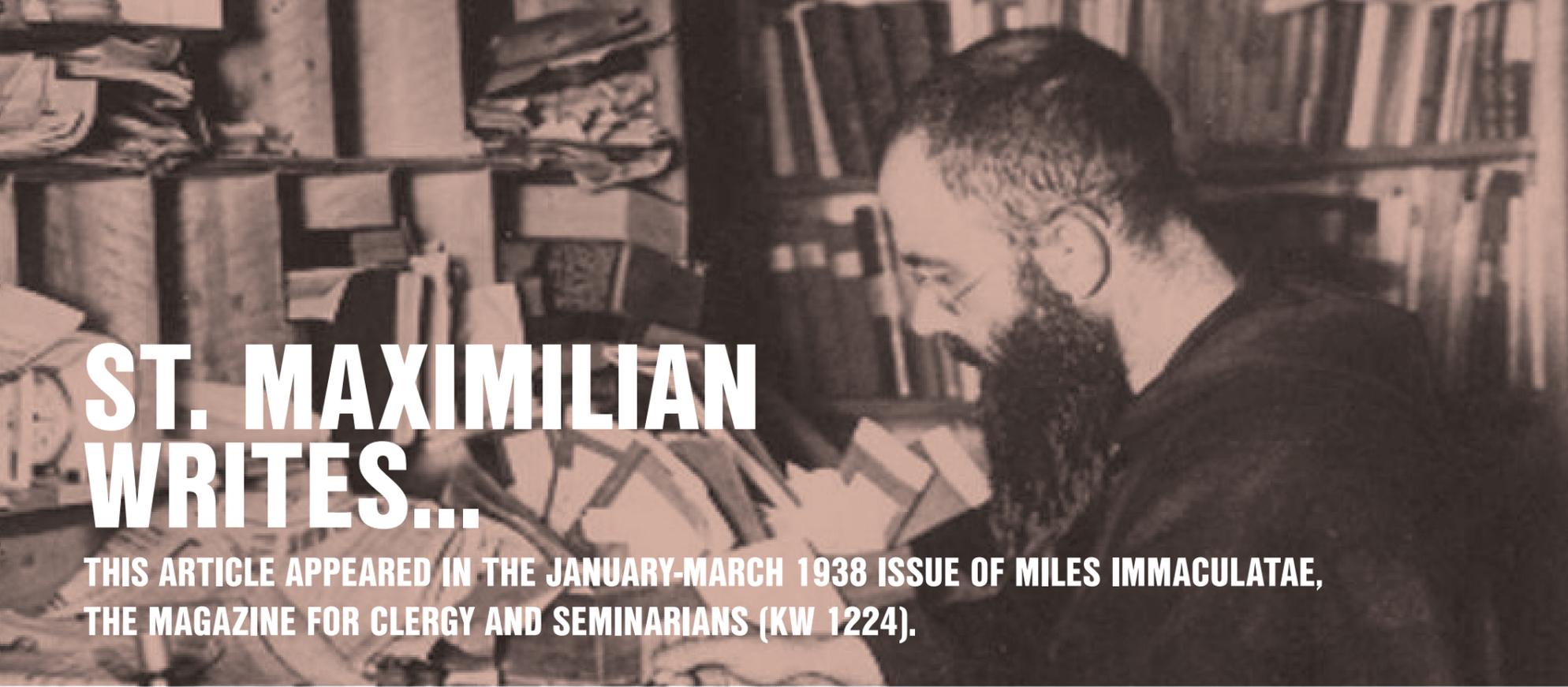
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# ST. MAXIMILIAN WRITES...

THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE JANUARY-MARCH 1938 ISSUE OF MILES IMMACULATAE, THE MAGAZINE FOR CLERGY AND SEMINARIANS (KW 1224).

Those who have written about you are truly numerous, O Immaculata! All, however, humbly admit that they were not able to write anything truly worthy of you. Their only consolation was the conviction that, through their words, you yourself would have spoken to souls and that you would have instructed those who are humble and chaste much better than they themselves could have understood while they were writing. Grant me that I may praise you, O Most Holy Virgin, though I am aware that I do not deserve to write about you and, moreover, even though I know that the human intellect is incapable of comprehending your glory. You are the Refuge of sinners, the Help of Christians, the Queen of the Apostles, of martyrs, of confessors, of all the

saints and of the angels themselves. You are the Mother of Christ, the Mother of the Savior, the Mother of the Redeemer, the true Mother of God. At this point human intelligence falls short, as it is unable to understand the infiniteness of God, and, consequently, the dignity of the Mother of God. God is love [1 Jn 4:16]. In the fullness of such life, the Father generates the Son, while the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. Since God, however, loved possible finite resemblances of Himself, too, He chose some of them and endowed them with true and real existence. Almost by way of reaction, these creatures perfect themselves, and thus move toward God, from Whom they come. People, too, who are endowed with free will, move in the same way toward God. Yet, what imperfections

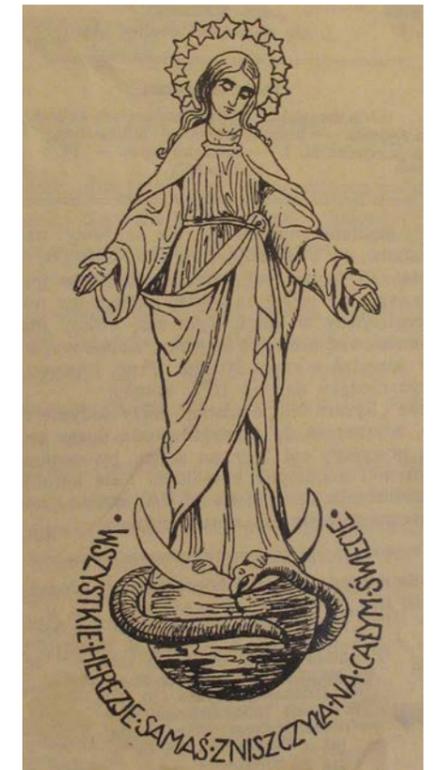
“**The Immaculate Virgin, instead, draws her origin from God: she is a creature, she is a conception, however, she is the Immaculate Conception.**”

they are prone to! How at variance they are from the Will of God, from Godhead itself! Yet, from all eternity, God had foreseen a Creature who would be at a distance from Him in nothing, not the slightest thing, who would squander no grace, and never claim possession of anything received from Him. From the first moment of her existence the Giver of graces, the Holy Spirit, established His dwelling in her soul, took possession of it absolutely, and permeated her so completely that the name of Bride of the Holy Spirit conveys but a pale, distant, imperfect, albeit truthful shadow of such union. He then did not allow her to be defiled by the stain of original sin; she was made without sin, conceived immaculately. To St. Bernadette, who had questioned her repeatedly in Lourdes, the

Immaculate Virgin answered: “I am the Immaculate Conception.” With these words she clearly stated that not only was she “conceived without sin” but that she was “Immaculate Conception” itself, just as a white object is more than its whiteness, or a perfect object is more than its perfection. Speaking of Himself to Moses, God said, “I am who am” [Ex 3:14], that is, it is of My very essence that I, by My nature, should always exist and that My existence should derive from Myself, without any beginning. The Immaculate Virgin, instead, draws her origin from God: she is a creature, she is a conception, however, she is the Immaculate Conception. What unfathomable mysteries are hidden in these words!

And just as in the natural and the supernatural orders all descends from the Father through the Son and the Spirit to the creatures, in the same way all creatures ascend to the Father through the Spirit and the Son. The Immaculate Virgin, however, the most perfect of creatures, was raised above every creature; she is a “divine” creature in an ineffable way. The Son of God, in fact, descended from the Father through the Holy Spirit, took residence in her, became incarnate in her, and she became the Mother of God, the Mother of the Man-God, the Mother of Jesus. Since then each grace—which comes from the Father through Jesus, the Son incarnate, and the Spirit, who dwells in the Immaculata—is bestowed precisely through the Immaculata. In addition, any manifestation of love among creatures does not come before God unless the Immaculata has purified it of all its im-

perfections, unless Jesus has raised it up to an infinite value and, therefore, made it worthy of the majesty of the Heavenly Father. The union between the Holy Spirit and the Immaculate Virgin is so close that the Holy Spirit, who permeated the soul of the Immaculata profoundly, exerts no influence on souls, except through her. Because of that she has become the Mediatrix of all graces, precisely because of that she is truly the Mother of all God’s graces. And also because of that she is also the Queen of angels and saints, the Help of Christians, the Refuge of sinners. Oh, how little is the Immaculate Virgin known yet! When will it happen that the souls of men will love the Divine Heart of Jesus with her Heart, and the Heavenly Father with the Heart of Jesus?



*Maximilianus M. Kolbe*



# REMEMBERING AND HONORING POPE BENEDICT XVI

BY MI NATIONAL-USA

**W**e mourn the death of Pope Emeritus Benedict who died on December 31, 2022. We pray that Mary will lead him to his new life, eternity with Jesus Christ.

Joseph Aloisius Ratzinger was born on April 16, 1927, in Marktl, Bavaria, Germany. He was the youngest of three children. He was ordained to the priesthood on June 29, 1951. Pope St. Paul VI named him a Cardinal on June 27, 1977. He was elected Pope after the death of Pope St. John Paul II. He served as our Pope from April 19, 2005, until his resignation on February 28, 2013.

On February 11, 2013, he announced his resignation, citing a “lack of strength of mind and body” due to his advanced age. This was the first pope to resign since Gregory XII in 1415, and the first Pope to resign on his own initiative, since Celestine V in 1294.

On the day after his election as Pope, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the cardinals with a message of unity and fidelity. He pledged to “work tirelessly for the reconstitution of a full and visible unity of all followers of Christ.” Looking to Christ, Ben-

“**Pope Benedict put himself in the hands of the Most Holy Mary. His gesture meant that he fully trusted her and knew he needed her, as a child needs his mother.”**

edict XVI renewed his “unconditional promise of fidelity. Him alone I intend to serve, dedicating myself totally to the service of His Church.” And then he added: “To support me in this promise, I invoke the maternal intercession of Most Holy Mary, in whose hands I place the present and the future of my person and the Church.”

Pope Benedict put himself in hands of the Most Holy Virgin Mary. He did the same on behalf of the whole Church. His gesture of placing himself, the Pope, and the Church, in the hands of Mary meant that he fully trusted her and knew he needed her, as a child needs his mother.

Pope Benedict recognized the “motherliness” of Mary. He highlighted the maternal role of Mary and her maternal quality, and spoke to her loving relationship with her Son Jesus Christ. While he was Cardinal Ratzinger, he spoke of Mary as being the Mother of the One who is life and gives life. Mary is the mother “of life and of the living,” the fulfillment of what Eve was meant to be. Cardinal Ratzinger saw Mary in the “original image of a woman.” She is the “pure figure of humanity and the Church.” Cardinal Ratzinger, in his funeral homily for Pope John Paul II, entrusted the Pope’s soul to the Mother of God that she might guide him to the eternal glory of her Son.

During his papacy, he advocated a return to fundamental Christian values to counter the increased secularization of many western countries. He viewed relativism’s denial of objective truth, and the denial of moral truths in particular, as the central problem of the 21st century.

His writings were prolific and generally defended traditional Catholic doctrine, values, and liturgy. He wrote 66 books, three encyclicals, and four apostolic exhortations. From 2002 until he was elected Pope, he was the Dean of the College of Cardinals. He was the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith from 1982-2005.

His last words were “Lord, I love you.” May we keep Pope Benedict XVI in our prayers.



## PRAYING FOR ONE PREBORN CHILD AT A TIME

I am writing to share an inspiration that I received over a year ago.

For several years, I have been promoting the prayer initiative of spiritual adoption of a preborn child that I had discovered in Poland. The MI in Italy has welcomed it wholeheartedly. Lately, however, I have had fewer opportunities to share it and I also realized that people find it difficult to commit to praying a decade of the Rosary each day for nine months. One day, while driving and praying the Rosary, I was considering the urgency of praying for the children from conception to birth. Suddenly, I was led to recall that during some private revelations Our Lady indicated that abortion is one of the greatest sins of our times. St. Mother Teresa echoed these words many times. How many tears our Mother has shed for the preborn children who are not allowed to live and for the parents who do not appreciate the gift of life! I came to find out that Jesus revealed to the Servant of God sister Amalia Aguirre (see <http://www.ourladyoftears.com>) that whatever He is asked through the tears of His Mother He gives lovingly. Why, then, should we not take advantage of His generosity and turn to Him each day praying for one preborn child at the time that he/she may be welcomed and loved?

I began praying the chaplet of Our Lady’s tears, promoted by the Shrine of Our Lady in Siracusa (see <http://www.catholictradition.org/Passion/tears.htm>), adding the following prayer intention:

**Eternal Father, with filial and humble confidence I offer You the tears of our Blessed Mother, through which You refuse us nothing because of her “Yes,” her fidelity and suffering, so that today an expectant mother may offer her own “yes,” choosing to welcome the child whom she carries in her womb. Grateful for such an immense gift, I offer also my expiation in union with the sorrows of Your Beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the women who do not honor you today. Amen.**

If many of us were to pray fervently to the Lord through the intercession of Our Lady, how many lives would be spared! While marching for life is very important in order to raise public awareness, ongoing prayer remains of paramount importance because this is primarily a spiritual battle. I firmly believe that in this way we can also contribute to consoling Our Lady as we join her in prayer with confidence and perseverance, interceding for this great cause.

Laura Magni, MI member, Ferrara, Italy



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.

### February

*O Immaculata, please intercede...  
That by living in simplicity and  
gratitude we may recognize  
creation as a gift received  
from the Father's love.*

**Psalm 89:12-13** - Yours are the heavens, yours the earth; you founded the world and everything in it. Zaphon and Amanus you created; Tabor and Hermon rejoice in your name.

**KW 1318** - All that exists outside of God, by virtue of the fact that it comes from God, totally and in every aspect from God, carries in itself a semblance to the Creator, and nothing exists in creation that does not bear in itself such a semblance, for everything is an effect of this prime cause.

**Reflection** - As we look at creation through eyes of faith, as did St. Francis of Assisi, we open ourselves to a new form of contemplation: we

admire the goodness and beauty of God's creatures, lift our souls in grateful adoration toward Him, care for His gifts, and willingly embrace a simple and grateful way of living in this world. Love toward the Immaculata should lead her Knights to loving God and His creation in practical ways, to caring for every human being and to appreciate the natural resources given for the well-being of everyone, intentionally avoiding the careless exploitation of His gifts.

Let us pray with St. Francis' Canticle of Brother Sun:

*Most High, all-powerful, all-good Lord,  
all praise is Yours, all glory, all honor and  
all blessings. To You alone, Most High, do  
they belong, and no mortal lips are worthy  
to pronounce Your Name.*

*Praised be You my Lord with all Your  
creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, who  
is the day through whom You give us light.  
And he is beautiful and radiant with great  
splendor, of You Most High, he bears the  
likeness.*

*Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister  
Moon and the stars, in the heavens you  
have made them bright, precious and fair.  
Praised be You, my Lord, through Brothers  
Wind and Air, and fair and stormy, all  
weather's moods, by which You cherish all  
that You have made. Praised be You my  
Lord through Sister Water, so useful, humble,  
precious and pure. Praised be You my  
Lord through Brother Fire, through whom  
You light the night and he is beautiful and  
playful and robust and strong....*

## 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



### Online MI Villages

Want to connect and pray with other MI members? Looking for support in deepening or preparing for your consecration? Join a virtual MI Village and live out your consecration with others. Email Moderators for information.

**\*\*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: Wednesdays  
Mtg Time: 8-00-9:00pm EST