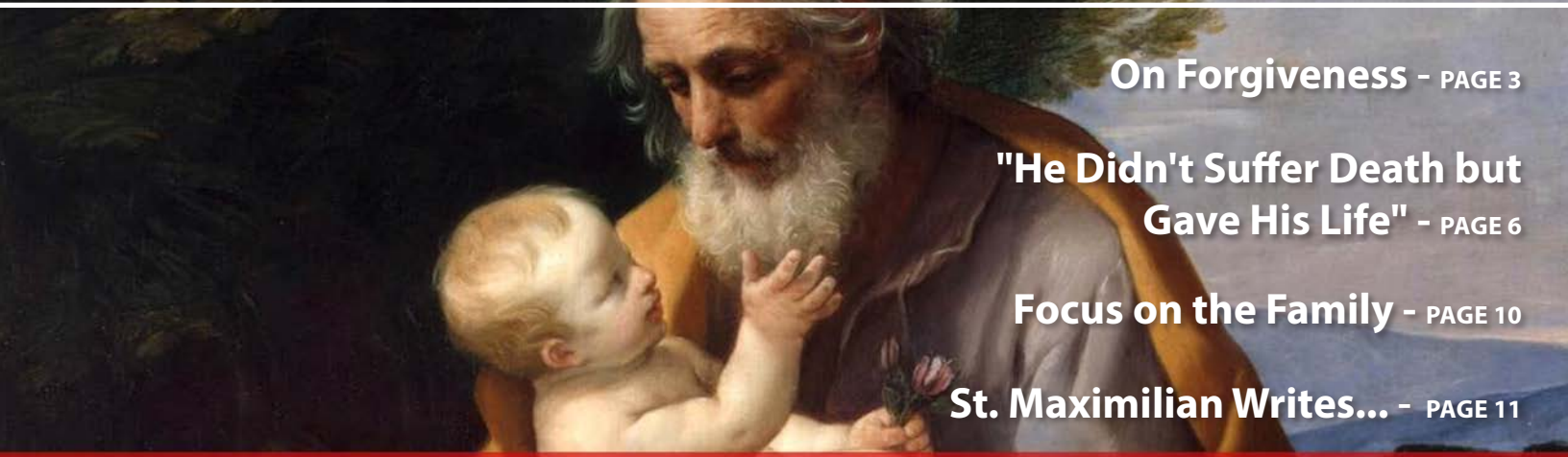


THE MISSION OF THE *Immaculata*

E-PUBLICATION OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA, USA



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80TH ANNIVERSARY OF ST. MAXIMILIAN'S MARTYRDOM

Embracing the Cross with Love

By John W. Galten, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! As I write this piece for the March newsletter, the Holy Season of Lent is just beginning. I was struck this morning by a Gospel statement that I had heard many times before but now heard with a startling freshness: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

Let us note that here we find a choice, a matter of the will. Jesus is not forced to take His Cross, He wills it. All of His life He was moved by the sacrifice of Himself, always living in the shadow of that Cross—a "sign" of contradiction to be rejected as was prophesied at His Presentation in the Temple. Each day He willingly started with the premise, "not my will, but yours [the Father's] will be done." The Immaculata herself, each day, out of her immaculateness gave herself over to the Father's will.

We, ourselves, must take up, and each day will to accept the cross in whatever form it presents itself. Some of these ways include the great limitation of sickness, aging weakness or some physical setback. Although it is not often mentioned against the background of his self sacrifice for another man, St. Maximilian suffered tuberculosis and the effects of the deadly disease. It destroyed much of his lung capacity and one could say left him with almost crippling effects so he was sent to a sanitarium just after finishing his studies in Rome, restricted under obedience to a hospital in the southern alpine mountains at Zakopane.

In a letter to a fellow friar (KW 55) the saint describes his "rule" of life in the recovery hospital. He is obedient to the will of God as expressed by his Superior. He is able to do only "little" things—handing out the Miraculous Medal, teaching classes, offering the Sacraments, and simple conversational teaching. As a

(continues on pg. 2)



"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

Editorial

(continued from pg. 1)

result, patients were converted, reconciled to the Church, and given hope... evangelization, always evangelization.

Although he seldom if ever refers to the lasting effects of TB, St. Maximilian must have suffered fatigue and lassitude all his life but it was heroic virtue and grace that enabled him to carry on even in Auschwitz, where he existed on starvation rations and brutally hard work—work designed to wear down and kill those who performed it.

Let us all resolve by his example not to waste a single moment of our daily cross, especially illness, aging and physical limitation. Let us, in our weakness, do as we can to spread the Kingdom of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, by standing by the suffering Mother at His/our cross.

Let us, like St. Maximilian, willingly take up our daily crosses and follow Him with her who accompanies us—all for Jesus, all for the Immaculata, all for our brothers and sisters.

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

John W. Galten,

MI National President

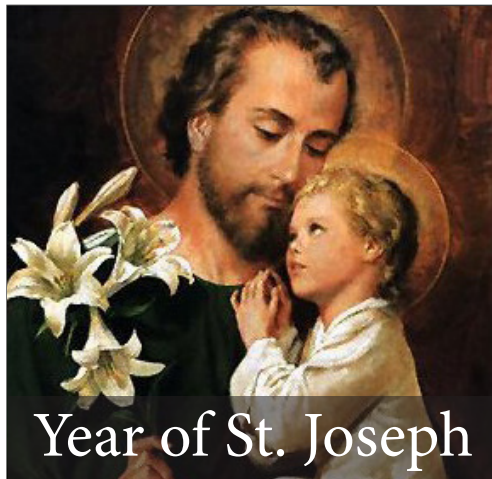


Daily Holy Mass

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

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

PrayerRequest@MissionImmaculata.com



Year of St. Joseph

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

Joseph, strong and gentle saint,

dear to God and His faithful shadow, remember me in all my spiritual and material needs.

Be my advocate before the Father. To you I bring my heart and soul and all my longings.

Sanctify them with your burning faith, your unfaltering hope, and with that great, self-sacrificing love that was the secret of your hidden sanctity.

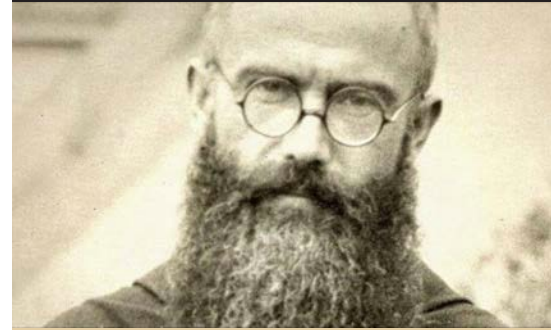
Christ was your peace: give Him to my heart, then by His light I will see the way that I must walk to stay with Him.

Give me the courage not to turn back because of darkness, sorrow, or sufferings.

Teach me the joy of loving God's Will, and help me to live, as you have done, within its calm and peaceful depths.

Amen.

See and Share the MI Film!



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

"Simply excellent!"

"Inspirational!"

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

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





On Forgiveness

“Unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart...”

A timely meditation as we journey through the holy Season of Lent.

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

It is always good to hear about forgiveness, because, until the very end, there are always things for us to forgive, and always things to be forgiven for. And this is something very beautiful about our Faith. Christianity is not just “me and God.” It’s “me and God and the people whom God loves.” Right at the heart of the Our Father, we say, “I give you permission – forgive me as much as I forgive other people. Don’t forgive me if I don’t forgive them.” It’s right there in the heart of our faith – our relationship to other people.

St. John says, “We can’t love God whom we don’t see if we don’t love the people that we do see” [1 Jn 4:20]. It’s very clear that our judgment will be connected with how we served other people. “You did it to Me. What you did to others, I take as a personal act towards Myself” [cf. Mt 25:40].

In the Gospel we hear the question: “What’s the greatest of all the commandments?” and Jesus responds, “Love God with everything. And the second is like it – though I know you didn’t ask me about this – love your neighbor as you love yourself” [cf. Mt 22:37-40]. It’s all mixed up together. St. Teresa of Avila said, “We can’t always know if we are loving God, but we know if we are loving our neighbor.” How we love our neighbor is a litmus test for how we are loving God.

What is forgiveness? This is such an emotional, human topic that several things have to be qualified. Forgiveness is

not saying, “That person did not harm me. There is really no problem.” This could be a lie, and forgiveness is not lying to yourself. Our Lord does not ask us to say, “That person treated you so shamefully and I want you to say that it was not so bad.” Forgiveness is not saying that the hurt was not real.

Someone might say, “I try to forgive, but later the memory comes back, and the anger comes back.” This does not mean you have not forgiven. Because we have a body, a memory and emotions, sometimes feelings of unforgiveness and anger come back. This is called being human! You may have forgiven some real, great harm in your life, but then the memory comes back, the memory triggers emotion, and you feel like you are back in the middle of it, drowning again. This doesn’t mean that you had not forgiven. It just means that you have to say, “All right, Lord, this is a very real hurt, and I give it back to you again.”

Forgiveness is in the will. The more we forgive, the easier it gets to forgive. We want to come to a place where we forgive and forget, but sometimes that’s out of our power. As long as we keep trying to forgive with our will to the best extent that we are able, we’ll be in a good place.

St. Peter says, “Lord, how often do I have to forgive my brother Andrew?” Imagine Andrew’s reaction! “What?! Why

has this got to be about us?” For the Jews, seven times was extreme. They weren’t expected to forgive anyone seven times. In some countries with old, pagan cultures, Catholic missionaries had to invent words in their language for the idea of forgiveness. We had to make a word, because forgiveness is not seen in the natural order. Volcanoes do not forgive. Gravity doesn’t forgive. Torrential downpours do not forgive. But Our Lord shows us a higher way. “As many as seven times?” In some Asian cultures there are no free gifts. If someone gives you something, you are obliged to give at least that much back. And unforgiveness also becomes a way of life. You keep a mental list of all the slights that have happened to you and to your family. Christianity comes with the call to forgive and it’s not so much an obligation as much as it is an invitation to freedom. One of the saints says that unforgiveness is like a rusty nail that is plunged into the soul, which spreads poison everywhere. It’s like a cancer which gets in us and spreads, and the Lord wants to free us from that. The ability to forgive comes to us as a grace from Christ. It is a grace of reparation, a grace of freedom. Not a burdensome virtue but an invitation to freedom.

Here we encounter a classic example of bad English translations of the Gospel [Mt 18:21-19:1]. I think it’s humorous. It says the first debtor owes a “huge amount.” If you look into your footnotes, what is a “huge amount”? It says he owed “ten thousand talents.” Okay, let’s break it down. One talent is fifteen years of labor. And he owed ten thousand talents. That’s fifteen years, ten thousand times! That’s ridiculous. To put it another way: imagine working every day since the Incarnation, over two thousand years, and then multiply that by seventy-five. It’s ridiculous! He owes him ten thousand talents – one hundred and fifty thousand years of labor. The other guy owes him about three months’ pay, a much smaller amount. So, the other guy owes him something, but it’s nothing compared to how the Lord has been slighted.

(continues on pg. 4)



On Forgiveness

(continued from pg. 3)

There is an imbalance there, and Our Lord wants to point it out. If God forgives you so generously, don't you think you should forgive the much smaller things? The Gospel is so beautiful. And then he says, "You must forgive from your heart. You must forgive from your heart."

Our Holy Father Francis takes this to radical extremes, as he is wont to do. He believes that God allows some negative things for a greater good; allowing really negative actions of others to give us an opportunity to love like God. It's almost humorous. In Chapter 22 of the First Rule, he says, "All my brothers [sisters too], let us pay attention to what the Lord says: love your enemies and do good to those who hate you, for our Lord Jesus Christ, whose footprints we must follow, called his betrayer a friend, and willingly offered himself to executioners." We must "follow our Lord's footprints." On the Cross Jesus makes excuses. "Father, they didn't know. Forgive them." He makes excuses. And Francis says,

He calls his betrayer a friend. Therefore, our friends are those who unjustly inflict upon us distress and anguish, shame and injury, sorrow and torment, martyrdom and death. These are our friends. We must love them greatly, for we shall possess eternal life because of what they bring us.

There is something so true about that. Our enemies bring us opportunities for grace that our regular friends cannot give us. Francis sees that as a joy. And so, our "friends" are those who inflict on us inju-

ry, and they bring us greater opportunity for grace than those whom we usually call friends. Then he has this super-challenging "Letter to a Minister." This minister was in charge of a friary and wrote to our Holy Father Francis a letter, and said, "I can't do this. Send me to a hermitage. It would be much better." Francis' words are so amazing.

I speak to you as best as I can about the state of your soul. You must consider as a good thing, as a grace, all that is impeding you from loving the Lord God as you want to. Consider a grace whoever has become an impediment to you, whether brothers or others, even if they lay hands on you. May you want it to be this way and not otherwise. [Oh, it's getting more tough!] And let this be for you true obedience of the Lord God, and my true obedience, for I know with certitude that it is true obedience. [To love them, to consider it as a grace, whatever it is, even if they lay hands on you, and to consider this obedience!] And love those who do those things to you. And do not want anything different from them, except insofar as the Lord gives it to you. And love them in this and [and this is so modern] do not want that they be better Christians. "If they were better Christians, then they ...!" St. Francis says – don't even question. Recognize that God is allowing this, and that it's going to be good for you. "And let this be more than a hermitage for you." Let this be more than a hermitage for you. "And in this I want to know if you love the Lord and me, his servant and yours, if you will do this, namely, [concrete!] that

there would not be any brother in the world who has..." – this part of the letter makes me think of St. Thérèse, who also spoke about the things that we need to forgive. She said, "You know, there is a sister in my community who has the capacity to..." – oh really? what is her capacity? – "to displease me in everything she does." Little Thérèse! "She has the capacity to displease me in everything she does"!!! Saint Francis says that

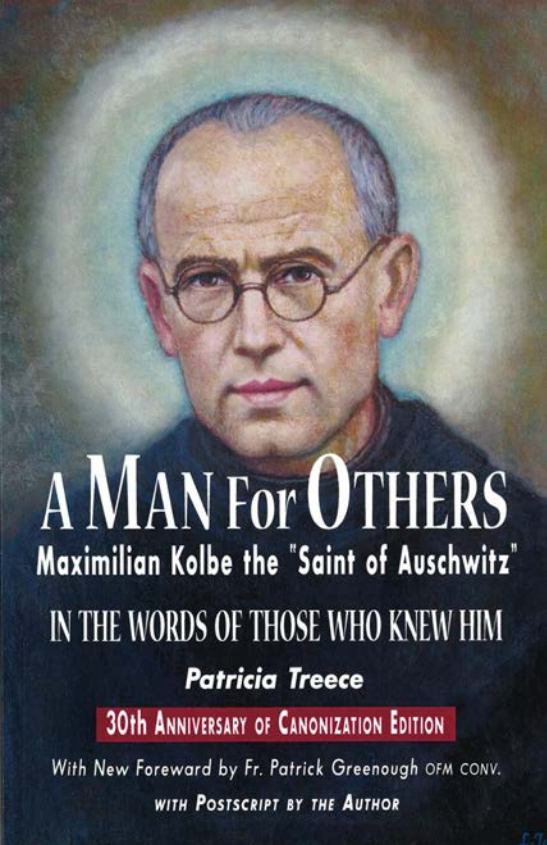
there would not be any brother in the world who has sinned, however much he could have sinned, who, after he has looked into your eyes, would ever return without your mercy, if he is seeking mercy. And if he were not seeking mercy, you ask him if he wants mercy. And if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord; and always be merciful with brothers such as these. And you may announce this to the guardians, when you can, that, for your part, you are resolved to act in this way.

So clear. Our Holy Father St. Francis also saw holding onto anger as a type of sin against the poverty we professed. Still holding on to something, and God wants you to be free, and you are taking some things to yourself...God will deal with this guy's problems, but this anger might be a little bit too personal, and God wants you to have the grace of freedom there.

So that's this challenging but beautiful Gospel. There is always something to forgive, always something to be forgiven of. The Lord wants to liberate us from this cancer of unforgiveness. He wants us to be generous as the Father is. He invites us to a freedom of heart like the Father has. In the way God has been so generous to us, he wants us to be generous with our neighbors whose sins against us are much smaller. May God give us the grace to do this, to have this radical freedom, with confidence in providence – that God is allowing these things – and see the ability to forgive as an opportunity to be free and to love like Him.

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

(Excerpted from a homily given at the Poor Clare Monastery in Roswell, New Mexico, on Thursday, August 13, 2020)



A Man for Others A Study Guide

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

The MI-USA is calling all Knights to recognize this heroic act by reading/studying the book *A Man for Others* by Patricia Treece, a beautiful and sensitive introduction to the Saint's life through the words of those who knew him.

This book can be ordered through the Marytown Bookstore. MI mem-

ber may receive a 20% discount when ordering it on-line with the code MI2021.

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

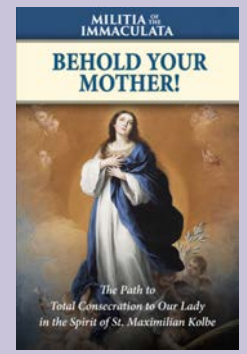
First questions:

To prepare, read pages vii—51.

- 1. Prologue**— How does St. Maximilian's life prepare him for his historic and heroic self-sacrifice?
- 2. Chapter 1:** How did the remarkable event of the Immaculata's apparition to the boy affect his future life?
- 3. Chapter 2:** As a student St. Kolbe's personality became more defined. From the reading, how would you describe him?
- 4. Chapter 3:** The Saint was confined to a tuberculosis hospital for some time. How did he occupy his time? How did he evangelize others under these conditions?
- 5. Chapter 4:** How did the City of the Immaculata, Niepokalanów, come about?
- 6. Chapter 4:** What is the significance of the name of the friary, City of the Immaculata?
- 7. Chapter 4:** How may an MI member in the world "mirror" the work of the Friars at the City of the Immaculata?

John W. Galten

Invite Friends to be consecrated to Our Lady!



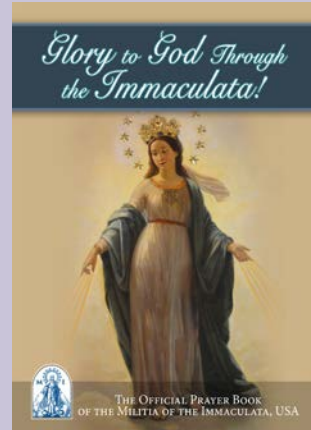
Behold Your Mother! The Path to Total Consecration to Our Lady in the Spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe

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

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

Now available in audio book form.

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



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



"He Didn't Suffer Death but Gave His Life" From the MI International Center

Maria!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, Knights of the Immaculata,

On behalf of the International Council of the Militia of the Immaculata, I would firstly like to share our desire that we enter into fervent prayer, so that 2021, the 80th anniversary of the glorious martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe—in which we will live a “Kolbean” year—may be a time when we take on the example of his virtues, especially his unlimited faith and his consecration to the Immaculata. That is to say, we must ask for the grace to deepen ourselves in our Founder’s school of holiness, a school of service and apostleship, an *active* and *effective* militia, willing to promote and defend the Good with the “arms” of faith, hope and charity in the conditions and realities in which we live at present, in the midst of COVID-19 that has attacked our world, claiming so many lives, and calling into question many of society’s habits, especially societies which are opulent, self-sufficient, but inhuman and selfish in a post-Christian Western World... In the heroic act of St. Maximilian Kolbe, we contemplate the admirable exercise of human freedom, the full giving of one’s self as the propitiatory victim in the service of good. Consequently, St. Maximilian Kolbe reconstructed human dignity exactly there in the place where the utmost was being done to destroy it. This extreme offering, this martyrdom moved by charity, was not an improvisation, but it was the virtue St. Maximilian Kolbe exercised all his life, always leaning on the Mother of God, the Mediatrix of all graces, the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without original sin. This is our ideal. It is above all the “unceasing martyrdom” to which Saint Maximilian Kolbe refers to in a conference he gave in Niepokalanów: “*Is it our ideal to shed blood for Christ? If not all at once, then throughout one’s whole life through the strict obser-*

vance of the Rule and obligations” (13.06.1939). We too ask the Immaculata for the grace to offer with serenity and supernatural joy our daily *bloodless* martyrdom, in each particular vocation and state of life we are living. This is the science of the Cross...

In this year dedicated also to St. Joseph, both he and St. Maximilian become examples of *filial trust* and, at the same time, of *fruitful spiritual human paternity*, which participates in the ultimate paternity of God, who is the principle and maintainer of all good. In the case of “Father” Kolbe, it is significant that the Polish priest gave his life for that of a young “father” of a family, Franciszek Gajowniczek.

With these humble reflections, our beloved knights, we encourage you to celebrate to the fullest this year of St. Maximilian Kolbe, as a vigorous stimulus to be faithful to our charism and to revitalize our enthusiasm and zeal for our mission and apostolate. In this regard, we follow the inspiration and guidelines that the MI International Center, through its President, Fr. Raffaele Di Muro, offered to the entire worldwide family of the Militia of the Immaculata at the conclusion of its Centennial in the document *Beyond the Centenary! Let Us Work for the MI of the Future*. During this Kolbean year, we will be accompanied by the faithful, productive, spiritual assistance from the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, for which we are grateful. There is an original “bond” that unites us to this religious congregation and to the Franciscan charisma. We are proud of it!

Like St. Maximilian Kolbe we must be light in the midst of our world (cf. Mt 5: 14)... There is an urgency of evangelization, for which our consecration to the Immaculata “enables” us. The Immaculata is the first and most interested in spreading the Good News of her Son to every corner of the earth.

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Thus, during the Kolbean Year, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, we remain committed, without truce, to the New Kerygmatic Evangelization and the Gospel of hope. This is the proper mission of the Church and, therefore, of our Militia, because it is the mission of the Immaculata, the Mother of the Word, the Mother of the Gospel, the Mother of the Church.

The invitation to encounter the living and risen Christ, our Savior, should be the beginning of a journey of conversion generating communion and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in order to launch ourselves as members of the Mystical Body of Christ (the Church) into the mission of being credible witnesses of Christ in our world. This encounter-journey with Our Lord leads us to discover him in Sacred Scriptures, in the Sacraments, in his Church and in his Mother, the Immaculata. You see, brothers and sisters, we have much “material” to work on in-depth this year. Let us always take as an example the testimony of the glowing life of St. Maximilian Kolbe and so many other fellow knights that have preceded us in this mission on our road to heaven, holding the hand of Mary. In these recent difficult times, we experience how She, our Best Teacher, continues to effectively prepare her apostles for this mission. Moved by Kolbean zeal, we must discern the new *fields of mission* to which the Immaculata is calling us at this time, with the family nucleus as our area of focus; we should continue to work our apostolate “at the foot of the Cross” along with the sick, in the service of the Gospel of Life, so their suffering is offered together with the sacrifice of our Redeemer Jesus Christ (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 618). There are many knights working their mission in the mass media. Our membership of the Militia stimulates our creativity to be at the service and cause of the Immaculata...

For our part, since the start of the current pandemic in the Spring of 2020, we

initiated the weekly, on-line prayer of the Worldwide Rosary by the Militia of the Immaculata for the end of the pandemic. One can join each Saturday from a different location through the International Center’s Facebook channel.

As Knights of the Immaculata, we must prepare ourselves properly for the mission. Whether by solid formation to help know, confess and proclaim the Faith, or by strengthening of our will and our virtues... Let us offer certain sacrifices and fasting from our pleasures, with our penance and reparation corresponding to so much love we have received and unfortunately reject. Let us therefore love, with the heart of the



Immaculata, the *unloved* love of her Son! We are convinced that a healthy asceticism, rooted in fervent, constant prayer, accompanied by a serious sacramental life, with particular attention to Confession and the Holy Eucharist, identifies us with Christ (Romans 6:5). To place our trust without reservation in the hands of the Immaculata, absolutely no longer trusting in our own strength, will make us more transparent, more docile to the action of grace for the good of all, both the closest and the farthest and also those who consider themselves

our adversaries, that is, those who do not know and, therefore, reject God’s love and oppose the Church.

United to the Immaculata we experience the action of her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, who simplifies our journey and fills it with supernatural joy, despite the difficulties that we will have to endure the more decisive and firmer is our commitment. Let me insist, *let us not forget Love...* In one of his last conferences, a year before his martyrdom, St. Maximilian Kolbe exhorted his friars, and he continues to exhort us all: “*Let us not forget, however, that all of good works, even the most sublime, such as maintenance of hospitals, schools, and missions, and even martyrdom, if they were done without love, they are less valuable than a single act of love alone. A single act of love helps the Church more in the sanctification of souls than do all the aforementioned works put together*” (25.08.1940).

Finally, in relation to the recent resignation of the International President, Angela Morais, whom we are grateful for her intense dedication to the Militia, we inform you that our intention is to call an assembly to elect a new President in accordance with the General Statutes. If the current circumstances permit, the convocation of said assembly would be for next August 2021, on the occasion of a possible worldwide pilgrimage of the Militia of the Immaculata to Auschwitz, for the central act of celebration being the 80th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Maximilian.

Cordially, always with the Immaculata,

Miquel Bordas Prószyński
Acting President
of the International Center
Militia of the Immaculata

(Excerpts from the Letter dated: Madrid, February 11, 2021, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. For the full text of the Letter click here)

MI

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



St. Max and His Friends

On February 17, 1941, the Gestapo arrived at Niepokalanów to arrest Fr. Maximilian Kolbe and other Franciscans. They were taken first to the Pawiak prison, in Warsaw. Father Justin, one of two out of the five Franciscan priests to survive their imprisonment, recalled how, in his depression over being arrested, it was the older, frailer Kolbe who cheered him up: *His words gave me great consolation.*

Kolbe was also a consolation to others in the large cell where the priests were first placed. Thaddeus L. Chrosicki, later an engineer in the field of wood technology, recalls: *All of us prisoners in the cell—we numbered about thirty—had in Father Maximilian the best of spiritual protectors and fathers. His whole person exuded something so calm and soothing that we all clustered close to him. Although I was rather young, I liked to listen as he and the others spoke about politics and social and religious questions. By asking questions and leading discussions and conversations, he created a more relaxed atmosphere, helped us forget [our fear and anxiety], and saved us from pessimism and despair.*

[Yet when our troubles were spoken of], whatever our pains, he understood what we were going through and helped us with advice, comfort, and encouragement. He was really our bulwark against spiritual dejection and encouraged us to be strong and to persevere. If our cell was a quiet one, this was undoubtedly due to his influence. Even prisoners who were inclined to be skeptical about people, after being with him, soon spoke their approval and respect for him. If conflict between prisoners did occur, he knew how to intervene with great tact and restore calm. I was young, as I said—only twenty two—and did not know how to give proper value to everything, but I believe his conduct among us grew out of his love for God and his role as one who somehow bore God within him.

When I saw him praying, I could see his profound union with God. And when he was persecuted because he wore his Franciscan robe, something he could have avoided by taking it off (which we advised him to do), he for a long time refused to do it, feeling that he should be distinguishable by his clothing and if this brought him ill treatment he should suffer it gladly for God's sake. I recall too that when it was suggested that he occupy some relatively more comfortable position in the cell, he always refused. In all this he never tried to make himself superior to others.... He looked for places where he could be of help.

Edward Gniadek was arrested by the Gestapo on January 12, 1941. In March, after having been kept in solitary confinement, he was put in a cell with a Jewish Pole he recalls only as Singer. He says:

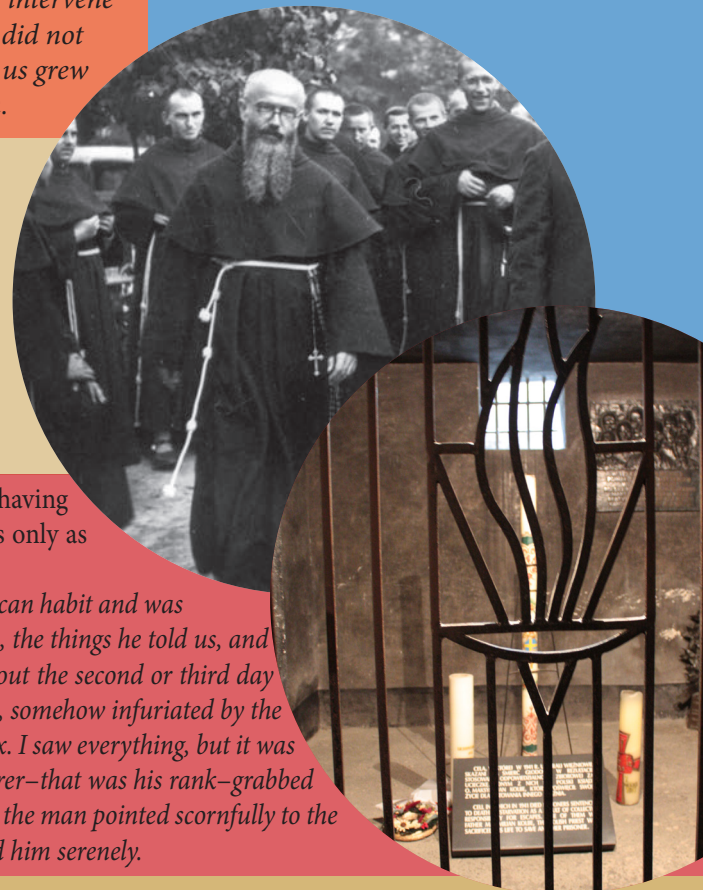
After a few days Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was added to our cell. He was wearing a Franciscan habit and was clean shaven. The presence of Father Kolbe, who differed so greatly from us by his calm, the things he told us, and conversation with him, calmed me and had the best possible effect on my nerves... About the second or third day after Father Kolbe joined us, one of the Gestapo men looked into our cell. He rushed in, somehow infuriated by the sight of Kolbe in his habit, from which hung the usual Franciscan rosary with its crucifix. I saw everything, but it was Singer afterwards who gave me the exact words, for I know no German. The Scharfuhrer—that was his rank—grabbed the rosary and, jerking on it, began haranguing Father Kolbe, who made no reply. Then the man pointed scornfully to the crucifix and snarled, “Do you believe in that?” “Yes, I believe,” Father Kolbe answered him serenely.

Aroused to a fever pitch, the assailant slapped the priest hard in the face. He grabbed the crucifix, again demanding, “You really believe, eh?” “Yes, I believe,” Father Kolbe again answered calmly.

With each affirmation, the SS man became angrier and more violent.

Anyway, after each reply he struck Father Kolbe in the face again and again. But finally, seeing that Father Kolbe could not be shaken, he gave up. Father Kolbe turned to me and said, “Please, I beg you, don’t be upset; you have a lot of worries and troubles of your own. What happened just now is really nothing because it’s all for my little mother (he meant the Mother of God).” The way he said this you would actually have thought nothing at all had happened.

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



Reflection on March MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that Lent may be a favorable time for our transformation according to the logic of love and solidarity, as St. Maximilian teaches us.

“Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Rm 12:2)

Lent is a privileged season in the liturgical year. We are called to review our life as disciples of Christ, by means of a more intense prayer life and penance. True penance is to follow Jesus along the way of the Cross, always mindful that there is no resurrection without Calvary, nor true life without Jesus.

Prayer is to become an authentic filial dialogue with God our Father.

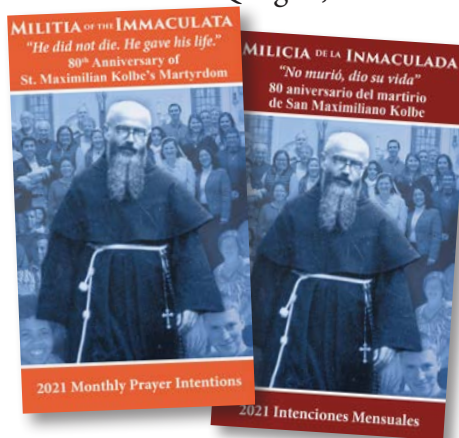
Alms-giving, which characterized our Lenten practice, should in fact be a permanent dimension of our Christian life of charity and solidarity with our brethren. As members of His Mystical Body, we should discern constantly in our brothers and sisters His Presence calling forth for our response of generous love and service. Lent, therefore, invites us, in Christ, to strive for that holiness of life which is our ultimate vocation.

How are we to practice *fasting and penance*? St. Maximilian replies simply: *“One’s health and the obligations of one’s life do not allow everyone to undertake the rigors of penance. Still, everyone acknowledges that the path of one’s life is strewn with minor trials. Acceptance of these in a spirit of penance: that is a vast field for the practice of penance. Also, the performance of one’s duties, the fulfillment of God’s will at every moment of life, perfect fulfillment in*

actions, words, and thoughts: all these call for many sacrifices of those things that may look more pleasing in a given time: that is another plentiful source of penance.” (KW 1303).

This is also the appropriate time for receiving and giving forgiveness, as Jesus teaches us in the *Our Father* (cf. Mt 6:12). St. Maximilian reminds us that, in His boundless Mercy, God assures us that “complete forgiveness of the sins others committed against us suffices for us to be entitled to forgiveness for the sins that we commit against God” (KW 925). We are to learn to love without limits as Jesus did to the end, forgiving even His persecutors. As Knights of the Immaculata, let us allow ourselves to be filled with His love. When we fall, let us quickly turn to His Mercy, that cannot stop forgiving. Let us echo Our Lady’s song and trust in Him: His Mercy endures forever!

Fr. Sebastiano B. Quaglio, OFM Conv.



**2021 MI Intentions leaflets
are available in English and Spanish.
Request them from
the MI National Office.**

Act of Total Consecration to the Immaculata

(Prayer composed by St. Maximilian Kolbe)

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

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

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

V. Allow me to praise you, O sacred Virgin.
R. Give me strength against your enemies.



Focus on the Family during the Year of St. Joseph

By Michael D. Wick, MI

In the midst of a year dedicated to Saint Joseph (12/8/2020-12/8/2021), Pope Francis announced that the Church would also commit itself to a special time of pastoral reflection committed to focusing on the family and the true meaning of conjugal love.

During his Sunday Angelus address on December 27, 2020, the Pope commemorated the feast of the Holy Family and said that it served as a reminder “of the example of evangelizing with the family” and urged the faithful to explore ways to effectively evangelize others through proclaiming and strengthening the gift of the Sacrament of Marriage and enabling families to “become active agents of the family apostolate.” In his Angelus talk, the Holy Father said that Jesus, Mary and Joseph serve as a model in which “all families of the world can find their sure point of reference and sure inspiration.” Through them, he said, “we are called to rediscover the educational value of the family unit; it must be founded on the love that always regenerates relationships, opening up horizons of hope.”

Families can experience sincere communion when they live in prayer, when forgiveness prevails over discord and “when the daily harshness of life is softened by mutual tenderness and serene adherence to God’s will,” he added.

As members of the Militia of the Immaculata, we should consider consecrating our families to Mary so that all of our members can collectively become, as it were, a miniature City or Garden of the

Immaculata, like the Holy Family’s house of Nazareth.

St. Maximilian Kolbe envisioned that the whole world should become a home or a city of Mary, where “God the Father is the Father, the Immaculata is the Mother and Mistress of the house, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar is the first-born Son and our Brother. All younger brothers and sisters, for their part, strive to imitate their elder brother [Jesus] in loving and giving homage to God and the Immaculata, our common parents” (KW 1284).

How might MI members take advantage of this special time of grace and blessing to renew their own family spiritually, and also reach out to other families—especially those divided, broken and wounded—in order to open up “horizons of hope”?

First of all, **recommit to pray together as a family unit whenever possible.** As the late Fr. Patrick Peyton, C. S.C., taught, “the family that prays together, stays together.” We must strive to worship at Mass together, recite the family Rosary, pray before meals, and make family pilgrimages to shrines, churches or other sacred sites. These times of social distancing should not restrict our spiritual connection—whether actual or virtual.

Second, **intentionally reach out to those you know, especially extended family members,** to engage with them both socially and spiritually. Such interaction might be as simple as a phone call, text message, FaceTime visit or an old-fash-

ioned handwritten note. Such gestures of love might present an opportunity to share your own faith with those who may be struggling or lonely in these challenging times. It is important to realize that the Holy Family lived their faith in the present moment, and so we too must strive to live in the “now” by not putting things off and taking advantage of the many ways we can actively connect with our loved ones.

Third, **consider getting involved with an established apostolate or charitable outreach** to bring the spirit of total consecration to those we encounter. Saint Maximilian envisioned that MI members would strive “to become ever more the property of the Immaculata, to endeavor to belong to her ever more perfectly and in all respects with no exception; to attempt to deepen ever more one’s belonging to her to the point of being able to enlighten, to warm, and to kindle the souls who live around us, and make them like oneself, win them over to the Immaculata, so that they too may belong to her without restrictions, and all that with the aim to win an ever greater number of souls, to conquer the whole world” (KW 1329). By moving out of our comfort zone and serving the needs of others, we can witness to the maternal love of Mary.

By living our total consecration to the Immaculata, both individually and collectively as a family, we become her instruments for the conversion and sanctification of others. As instruments she will use us in ways that only she can, often unnoticed and seemingly minuscule in the ways of the world. Yet it was through a single family unit—the Holy Family of Nazareth—that God chose to come into the world in order to redeem it.

During this Year of St. Joseph and in this special time of grace dedicated to the authentic renewal the family, may each of us live our total consecration to the Immaculata and consciously work to evangelize others, beginning with ourselves, our loved ones and then the entire world!



St. Maximilian Writes...

In 1924, Fr. Maximilian wrote this letter, encouraging an MI member to persevere in his apostolic endeavors (KW 97).

Dear Sir,

Please do not be discouraged by the fact that coldness and malice prevail, because the grace of God, through the Immaculata, is stronger. If they do not want to pay for *Rycerz*, then we will gladly send it for free, and the Immaculata will provide for finding the offerings for that place from somewhere else.

The purpose of the Militia of the Immaculata is to conquer the whole world, all hearts and each person individually, for the Queen, not only of Heaven, but also of the Earth. To give true happiness to those poor unfortunates who seek it in the ephemeral pleasures of this world, this is our aim.

You have to conquer even *Zawiercie* for the Immaculata: this is your place of battle. We must fight with our prayer, good example, and cordiality, with great gentleness and kindness, as a reflection of the Immaculata's goodness. Those people who seek happiness outside of God are unhappy people who, wrapped up in sin and vice, are chasing happiness, looking for it where there is none and where they cannot

find it. In addition, the Medal of the Immaculata is the weapon or rather the bullet that serves every Knight of the Immaculata. Someone could be the worst of all creatures, but if he agrees to wear the medal, it must be given to him. We gladly send as many as are needed for free. You must pray for him and at the right opportunity, through a kind word, try to bring him slowly to love the Immaculate Mother with all his heart, to take refuge in her in all his difficulties and temptations. He, who begins to pray sincerely to the Immaculata, after a short time, especially on her feast day, will be persuaded to go to confession. There is much evil in the world, but let us remember that the Immaculata is more powerful and "she

shall crush the head of the serpent" [cf. Gn 3:15].

For now we are not printing copies with the inscription "free," simply for lack of time, but maybe we will resume this practice. In any case, we will gladly send anywhere all the copies that are needed, and if someone does not have the means, let him not pay. However, if he has enough money for vodka, then obviously he will have to sacrifice something, because otherwise he will not appreciate *Rycerz* and will throw it away without reading it.

May the Immaculata give you strength while you fight for her.

Br. Maximilian M. Kolbe

A Miraculous Medal Story

One of my wife's relatives who was dying received a wonderful gift care of the Immaculata. Early on in her disease, I sent her a Miraculous Medal, which she graciously and joyously accepted. Recently, she has entered hospice and was resigned to death. I sent her a letter inviting her to Baptism. She, with great gusto, said yes and arranged to have a priest visit her and give her the Sacraments. She made the decision on or near the feast of the Miraculous Medal. She was baptized and received into the Church early in December. I prayed to Our Lady and Venerable Satoko Kitahara for a gift for her and I take it that they delivered in spectacular fashion. Praised be Jesus Christ and His Holy Mother! (from an MI Member)



fr. Maximilian M. Kolbe

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 brochures can be requested from the MI National Office at

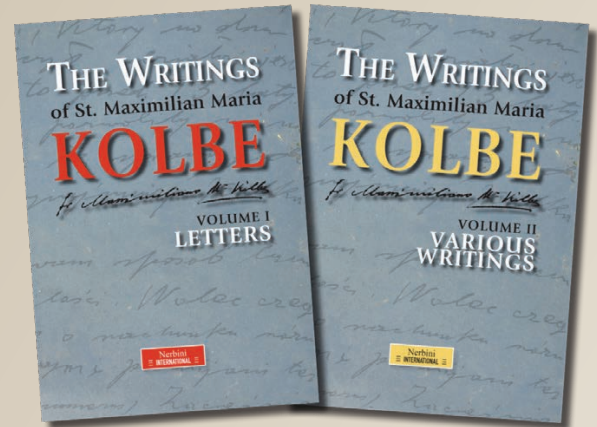
331-223-5564 or via email: MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

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The Definitive English Edition!

Saint Maximilian Kolbe died at Auschwitz Concentration Camp as a "Martyr of Charity" in 1941. The Polish-born Franciscan Friar 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. Now, at long last, devotees and scholars alike can find the entire wide-ranging array those writings collected together in a two-volume compendium published by Nerbini International.



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Check the MI website MilitiaoftheImmaculata.com often for updates, resources, special events and more!

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