

THE KNIGHT OF THE *Immaculata*

E-PUBLICATION OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA, USA

MARY, THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

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SPRINGTIME FOR THE SOUL

by Ronald L. Rodrigues, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata, Maria! Spring is on the way, and it is a time to think about new growth, not only in our own lives but in the lives of others, a time to know and love God and be Christ to one another. It is the time when the Archangel Gabriel visited the Blessed Virgin Mary to tell her that she would be the Mother of the Savior, that she would conceive and bear a son through a virgin birth, and become the Mother of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God. The Solemnity of the Annunciation is the main event that signifies the beginning of the Incarnation when the angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and told her she would conceive and be the mother of Jesus Christ. The Annunciation is the beginning of our salvation and the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Annunciation is the reason we celebrate Christmas. Christmas comes exactly nine months after the Archangel Gabriel invited the Virgin Mary to be the Mother of God. The feast of the Annunciation was first celebrated in the fourth or fifth century. The central focus is on the Incarnation: God has become one of us. The feast is usually on March 25th. When the calendar system of Anno Domini was first introduced by Dionysius Exiguus in AD 525, he assigned the beginning of the new year to March 25th since, according to Catholic theology, the era of grace began with the Incarnation of Christ. The 25th of March was used as the new year's day in many pre-modern Christian countries. The holiday was moved to January 1st in France by Charles IX's 1564 Edict of Roussillon. In

England, the feast of the Annunciation became known as Lady Day, marking the beginning of the English new year until 1752.

At the Annunciation, the Archangel Gabriel said to Mary, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David." In Hebrew, Jesus means God saves. Her son is Immanuel, meaning "God is with us."

Mary has an important role to play in God's plan. From all eternity, God destined her to be the Mother of Jesus and closely related to Him in the re-creation and redemption of the world. Mary is God's instrument in the Incarnation. It is a God-given role. It is God's grace from beginning to end. Mary becomes the eminent figure, only by God's grace. She is the receptive space where God could act. Everything she is, she owes to the Most Holy Trinity.

Mary is the Virgin Mother who fulfills Isaiah 7:14 in a way that Isaiah could not have imagined. She is united with her Son in carrying out the will of God (Psalm 40:8-9, Hebrews 10:7-9, Luke 1:38. Together with Jesus, Mary is the link between heaven and earth. She is the human being who best, after Jesus, exemplifies our human existence. She received into her lowliness the infinite love of God. She shows how an ordinary human being can reflect God in the ordinary circumstances of life. She exemplifies what the Church and every member of the Church is meant to become. She is the ultimate prod-

uct of the creative and redemptive power of God. She manifests what the Incarnation is meant to accomplish for all of us. Mary showed us what faith is, and also trust, commitment, obedience, humility, and submission. The Church's theological tradition speculates that one of the reasons the bad angels may have rebelled against God was envy. They may have discovered that God chose to become man, instead of the higher form of an angel. This envy would have been directed at the Virgin Mary as well, the Ark of the Covenant who bore the divine choice. God not only became man, we must remember, but did so through a human being, one prepared from her conception to be perfect. March 25th is one of only two days of the year when we kneel at the recitation of the Creed at Mass. At the words "... by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man," all heads bow and all knees bend at the wonder of it. If the story of Christ is the greatest story ever told, today is its first page. Mary, we ask for your intercession in making us as generous as you in accepting the will of God in our lives, especially when that will is expressed in mysterious ways. May you be that perfect example to what God desires of us.

Let us go and bring Mary to others as St. Maximilian said "to win the entire world for the Immaculata and through her, for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Ronald L. Rodrigues
MI National President

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

MARY, THE HANDMAID OF THE LORD

FROM THE MARIAN CATECHESSES OF POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

Mary's words at the Annunciation "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38), indicate an attitude characteristic of Jewish piety. At the beginning of the Old Covenant, Moses, in response to the Lord's call, proclaims himself His servant (cf. Ex 4:10; 14:31). With the coming of the New Covenant, Mary also responds to God with an act of free submission and conscious abandonment to His will, showing her complete availability to be the "handmaid of the Lord."

In the Old Testament, the qualification "servant" of God links all those who are called to exercise a mission for the sake of the Chosen People: Abraham (Gn 26:24), Isaac (Gn 24:14) Jacob (Ex 32:13; Ez 37:25), Joshua (Jos 24:29), David (2 Sam 7, 8, etc.). Prophets and priests, who have been entrusted with the task of forming the people in the faithful service of the Lord, are also servants. The Book of the Prophet Isaiah exalts, in the docility of the "suffering Servant," a model of fidelity to God in the hope of redemption

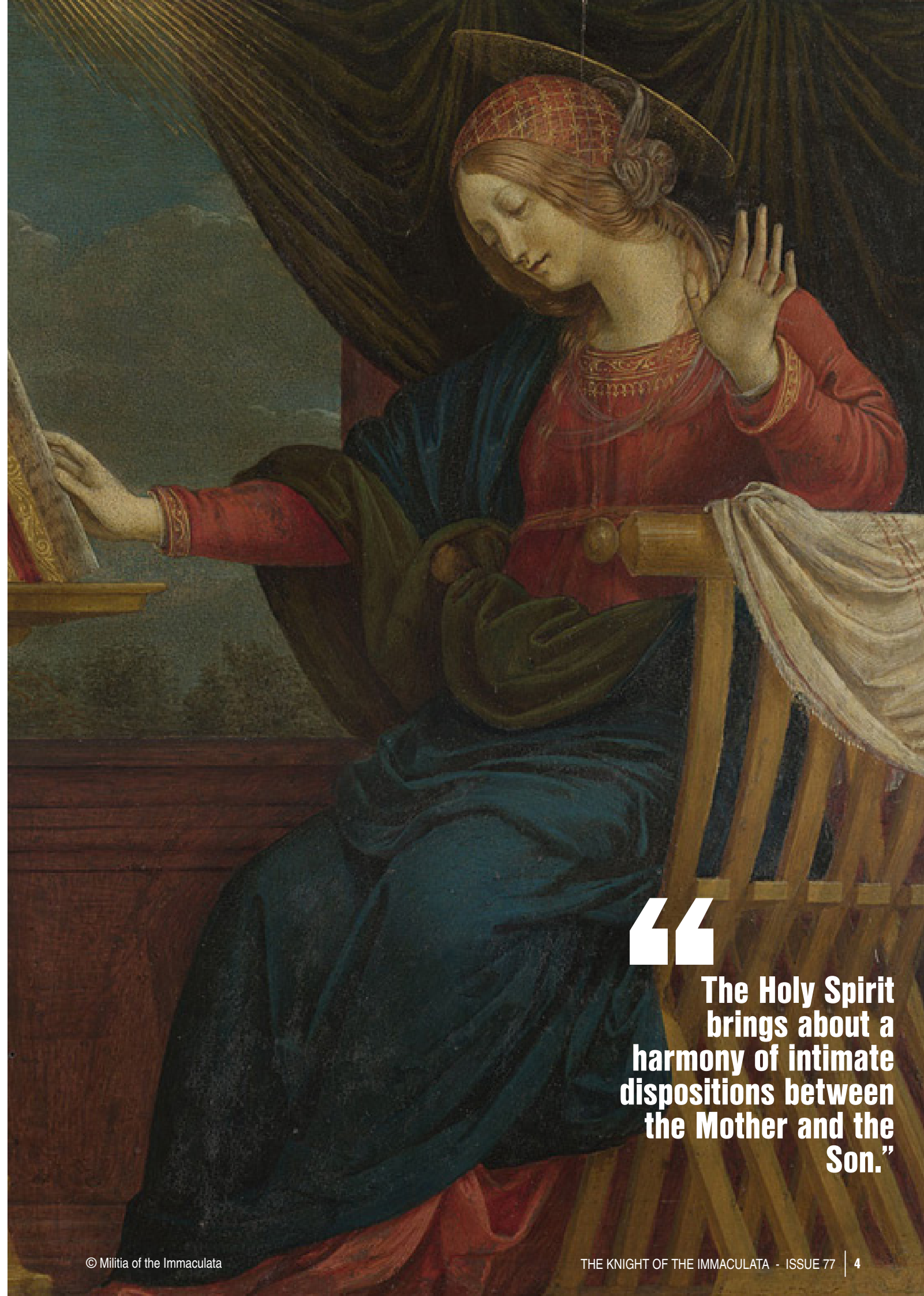
for the sins of the many (cf. Is 42:53). Some women also offer examples of fidelity, such as Queen Esther who, before interceding for the salvation of the Jews, addresses a prayer to God, calling herself many times "your servant" (Est 4:17).

MARY'S "FIAT" PREFIGURES JESUS' TOTAL OBEDIENCE

Mary, "full of grace," by proclaiming herself "handmaid of the Lord" intends to commit herself to fulfil personally and in a perfect manner the service God expects of all His people. The words: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," foretell the One who will say of Himself: "The Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45; cf. Mt 20:28). Thus the Holy Spirit brings about a harmony of intimate dispositions between the Mother and the Son which will allow Mary to assume fully her maternal role to Jesus, as she accompanies Him in

His mission as Servant. In Jesus' life the will to serve is constant and surprising: as Son of God, He could rightly have demanded to be served. Attributing to Himself the title "Son of Man," whom, according to the Book of Daniel, "all peoples, nations, and languages should serve" (Dn 7:14), He could have claimed mastery over others. Instead, combating the mentality of the time which was expressed in the disciples' ambition for the first places (cf. Mk 9:34) and in Peter's protest during the washing of the feet (cf. Jn 13:6), Jesus does not want to be served, but desires to serve to the point of totally giving His life in the work of redemption.

Furthermore, Mary, although aware of the lofty dignity conferred upon her at the angel's announcement spontaneously declares herself "the handmaid of the Lord." In this commitment of service she also includes the intention to serve her neighbor, as the link between the episodes of the Annunciation and the Visitation show: informed by the angel of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Mary sets out "with haste" (Lk 1:39) for Judah, with total availabil-



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ity to help her relative prepare for the birth. She thus offers Christians of all times a sublime model of service. The words: "Let it be to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38), show in her who declared herself handmaid of the Lord, a total obedience to God's will. The optative *genoito*, "let it be done," used by Luke, expresses not only acceptance but staunch assumption of the divine plan, making it her own with the involvement of all her personal resources.

MARY IS COMPLETELY FREE BEFORE GOD AND RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMANITY

By conforming to the divine will, Mary anticipates and makes her own the attitude of Christ who, according to the Letter to the Hebrews, coming into the world, says: "Sacrifice and offerings you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me ... Then I said ... 'Behold I come to do your will, O God'" (Heb 10:5-7; Ps 40 [39]: 7-9). Mary's docility likewise announces and prefigures that expressed by Jesus in the course of His public life until Calvary. Christ would say: "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work" (Jn 4:34). On these same lines, Mary makes the Father's will the inspiring principle of her whole life, seeking in it the necessary strength to fulfil the mission entrusted to her. If at the moment of the Annunciation, Mary does not yet know of the sacrifice which will mark Christ's mission, Simeon's prophecy will enable her to

glimpse her Son's tragic destiny (cf. Lk 3:34-35). The Virgin will be associated with Him in intimate sharing. With her total obedience to God's will, Mary is ready to live all that divine love may plan for her life, even to the "sword" that will pierce her soul.... In stating her total "yes" to the divine plan, Mary is completely free before God. At the same time, she feels personally responsible for humanity whose future was linked with her reply. God puts the destiny of all mankind in a young woman's hands. Mary's "yes" is the premise for fulfilling the plan which God in His love had prepared for the world's salvation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* briefly and effectively summarizes the decisive value for all humanity of Mary's free consent to the divine plan of salvation. "The Virgin Mary 'cooperated through free faith and obedience in human salvation'. She uttered her yes 'in the name of all human nature'. By her obedience she became the New Eve, mother of the living" (n. 511). By her conduct, Mary reminds each of us of our serious responsibility to accept God's plan for our lives. In total obedience to the saving will of God expressed in the angel's words, she becomes a model for those whom the Lord proclaims blessed, because they "hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk 11:28). Jesus, in answering the woman in the crowd who proclaimed His mother blessed, discloses the true reason for Mary's blessedness: her adherence to God's will, which led her to accept the divine motherhood.

Pope St. John Paul II
Excerpts from General Audiences of September 4 and 18, 1996.



“**Mary makes the Father's will the inspiring principle of her whole life, seeking in it the necessary strength to fulfill the mission entrusted to her.**”

A LOOK AT ST. JOSEPH

"Joseph trusts God when he hears His messenger, the Angel, say to him: 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her' (Mt 1:20). Throughout all of history, Joseph is the man who gives God the greatest display of trust, even in the face of such astonishing news. Dear fathers and mothers here today, do you have trust in God who has called you to be the fathers and mothers of His adopted children? Do you accept that He is counting on you to pass on to your children the human and spiritual values that you yourselves have received and which will prepare them to live with love and respect for His holy Name? God alone will give you, dear married couples, the strength to raise your family as HE wants. Ask it of Him! God loves to be asked for what He wishes to give." BENEDICT XVI

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WHEN GOD CALMS THE STORM

A EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL STORY

“When it was evening, the boat was far out on the sea and Jesus was alone on the shore. Then He saw that they were tossed about while rowing....” (Mk 6:45-52)



It was the early evening of the first day of the new year, 2007, and my son and I had just gotten home from visiting my dad, who was in a respite care unit at a local hospital enduring the final stages of his battle with lung cancer. Additionally, he'd suffered a stroke that morning, limiting his movement and robbing him of his ability to speak clearly. I felt like one of the disciples in the boat on the stormy sea, being tossed around by the waves, desperately trying to row to the other side with the wind against us. In my mind, I went back to the past year in which we'd rowed our way through the sea of biopsies, scans, doctor appointments, chemo treatments, procedures, holidays, and a few trips to visit extended family. But the wind had picked up speed these past few weeks: the cancer had stopped responding to treatment, blood clots had formed in his lungs, and his doctor told me of the kind of death he would most likely suffer, adding: "I wouldn't wish this kind of death on my worst enemy." And now this—a stroke, robbing him of what little ability he had left. Just a few years earlier, we'd lost Mom to this same disease and I admit to wondering this day—"God, where are you now?" I didn't have to wait long for his answer. Shortly after arriving home from the hospital, the phone rang. It was a nurse at the hospital saying that Dad was suffering from chest pains, and that it would be best if we came back to the hospital right away. Although Dad was a very



faith-filled man who taught us kids to love the Lord and see Jesus in other people, he wasn't Catholic. It was my dearest desire that Dad experience the grace of the sacraments of the Church before he died. Our priest, Fr. Tim, had asked me several weeks earlier if Dad wanted to join the Catholic faith but when I asked Dad, he was a little hesitant, saying, "I don't think so right now, thanks."

PRAYING WITH THE EUCHARIST

I once heard Mother Angelica of EWTN fame speak on how if you're really praying hard for something, you should bring it with you when you receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Consequently, for the past several weeks, every time I received the Eucharist I offered Him up to God in exchange for Dad to have the desire to join the Catholic faith. On the way to the hospital that evening, we called our priest, Fr. Tim. Would he come and give Dad a blessing or pray over him? He agreed, asking once again, "Do you think he'd like to become Catholic?" Heavy-hearted, I replied, "I don't know. I don't think he's changed his mind."

The doctor met us in the lobby of the hospital and explained how serious Dad's health was and that he had requested no unnecessary treatment due to his advanced cancer. She seemed to be preparing us for the worst. My husband and my two brothers and I entered Dad's room. He was in pain but so glad to see us. We gathered around his bed; I held his hand and told him Fr. Tim was coming. In my mind, I imagined Fr. Tim offering Dad the very sacraments that I had been praying for him to receive. But would Dad be open to them?

Suddenly, I had this overwhelming urge—a physical sensation welling up in my body—that I had to ask Dad just one more time if he wanted to become Catholic, but I was hesitant.



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“If you’re really praying hard for something, you should bring it with you when you receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.”

didn’t want Dad doing it for love of me—I wanted him to do it for himself. And I’d just asked him a few weeks before. Could this sudden, overwhelming urge be God nudging me? Was he working to answer the very prayer I’d brought before him each time I’d received the Eucharist for weeks now? Dare I hope? I pulled my brothers out of the room and discussed this “feeling” I had and my reluctance to ask Dad. My oldest brother, who wasn’t practicing any religion at the time, said simply, “I’ll go ask him.” And that’s when Jesus climbed into the boat with us. My brother came out of the room a few minutes later saying, “Yep, he does!” Stunned, I asked, “Are you sure you understood him? He’s had a stroke, you know. He can’t speak well...” to which my brother replied, “I told him to squeeze my hand if he wanted to become Catholic and he squeezed it three times!” Oh, the joy that filled my heart! Jesus was powerfully answering the prayer I’d so hesitantly brought before Him in the Eucharist. The priest came, and Dad was received into the

Church, confirmed and anointed. He made a Spiritual Communion because his illness prevented him from receiving the Blessed Sacrament. I sat by Dad’s side holding his hand through it all, hardly able to comprehend the holiness of the moment. We prayed the Lord’s Prayer together one last time. The storm’s winds that had been blowing so fiercely died down, and Dad rested peacefully through the night.

WINDS OF DOUBT

But, like the disciples, there was a part of me that still doubted. Was Dad resting comfortably because of the grace of the sacraments or the newly-installed morphine pump (the machine that administered the drug that relieved pain and gave the sensation of being able to breathe)? Several times that long night, I got out of the recliner and walked over to Dad’s side to adjust the oxygen mask, knowing how hard it was for Dad to breathe without it and wanting to



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

PENITENTIAL REVIVAL, ANYONE?

Msgr. Robert J. Batule, a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, in an article published by *The Catholic Thing* on December 28, 2022, suggests that it’s urgently needed and long overdue: “We must do all we can – including perhaps starting a Penitential Revival – to preach, teach, and receive the Lord’s mercy sacramentally. The night, Saint Paul tells us, is far spent, the day is at hand. (cf. Rom 13:12) Let us walk in the light of day given to us by Christ in His death and Resurrection. In the design of the Risen Christ, the Church has the authority to bind and loose. (cf. Jn 20:23) May the Church’s work of extending the Lord’s mercy find more and more receptive ears. But those same ears also need to hear these words: ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ (Mt 3:2)”



make him as comfortable as possible. During one of my bedside vigils, the nurse came into the room lit only by the glow of a light in the side of the wall and stood next to me, gently and quietly taking Dad’s vital signs. She and I both commented how peacefully he was resting. “That morphine must be doing the trick,” I whispered. Startled, she glanced over at me and said, “He hasn’t used that pump all night.” What? How was that possible? He was in so much pain and struggling so hard to breathe before the priest came. What had changed?

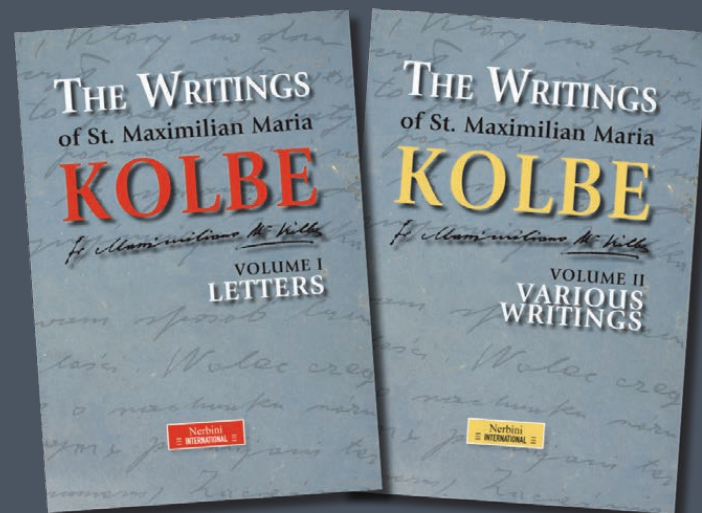
PEACE IN GOD’S PERFECT TIMING

Jesus had shown up. His grace was present in the sacraments that gave

Dad the peace he needed. And that’s when I, like the disciples in the boat in the storm-tossed sea, was completely astounded. Jesus came through our darkness with His radiant light. Dad passed away a few hours later: calmly, peacefully, and prayerfully. God had answered my prayer brought before Him in the Eucharist at the perfect time and in the perfect way. And I realized: God doesn’t come too early, and He doesn’t come too late. He comes just when we need Him the most.

Barb Schmitz is a parishioner at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Brooks, MN. (Originally printed in the Heart of Revival Newsletter. Reprinted with permission)

For more on the Eucharistic Revival, please visit eucharisticrevival.org



VOLUME I: *LETTERS* • VOLUME II: *VARIOUS WRITINGS*

The Definitive English Edition!

The Martyr of Charity, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894-1941), before his death in the Auschwitz concentration camp, had a full and fruitful life. 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 devotees and scholars alike can find the entire wide-ranging array of those writings collected together in a two-volume compendium, published by Nerbini International.



At long last the complete works of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe in English: accurate, readable and with explanatory introduction and footnotes. Both scholars and general readers will find this edition of the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe an inspiring practical aid for learning what this Franciscan saint has contributed to the study of Mariology and living the consecration to Mary's Immaculate Heart. May the translators' work contribute to a renewal of Kolbean studies in the English speaking world.

— Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, OFM Conv.

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



SHARE THE MI SOME "HOW TO" TIPS



You love Our Lady, you have discovered the inspiring example of St. Maximilian Kolbe, you have joined the MI and are happy to be part of her MI Family. Correct?

SO, how do you share with others the gift you have received?

It's simple. Each of us can and should do this!

"Freely you have received, freely give."

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 - one person at a time.

Here are a few tips on how to get started. The Holy Spirit will certainly suggest other ways you could implement in your situation.

Do not be afraid! Be daring! People are waiting to hear: "Behold your Mother!"

- **Wear and carry the Miraculous Medal:** you will be surprised how many opportunities you will have to start a conversation.
- **Wear an MI T-shirt:** it will spark a question or two...!
- **Keep MI introductory brochures in your purse or in your car:** do not hesitate to share one with a friend asking the simple question: "Have you ever heard of St. Maximilian Kolbe and his Militia of the Immaculata movement?"
- **Approach your pastor and ask permission to post MI literature at your church, to submit a column on your parish bulletin or to show the MI FILM or host an informative meeting about Marian consecration:** keep in mind that the MI Film is a powerful way to introduce the MI to people! The MI National Center is more than happy to send you a supply of brochures and sample bulletin articles. *MI speakers are available* to travel and to assist you in planning and giving a n MI presentation. Find out more: MINational@MissionImmaculata.com
- **Volunteer to represent the MI at Catholic events in your area:** Find out if they allow you to have a booth or a table. Contact MI National for a supply of MI literature. There might be other MI members in your area who could help. Reach out and share the gift you have received!
- **For brochures and more information contact:** MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

ST. MAXIMILIAN WRITES...

AN EXAMLE OF HIS MASTERFUL WAY OF ENGAGING HIS READERS THROUGH FAITH AND REASON (KW 1052).

The mystery of faith! This phrase excites love and gratitude in some people, discourages others, and to others still it becomes a stumbling block. These last assert: "I only believe what my reason is able to fathom." Let me start by glossing over the obvious absurdity of such a statement, since if we experience something personally, we no longer need to lean on another person in order to believe. Besides, is it really true that these gentlemen consider true only what they themselves have examined? Have they possibly traveled to every city in Poland, the whole of Europe, America, Asia, in a word throughout the whole world in order to make sure that geographical maps do not deceive them? Is it absolutely necessary to physically accompany Napoleon in his exploits to accept the evidence

that history presents about him? And does not that young gentleman set off after all toward the station to start his journey, just at the time he has looked up in the train schedule? What then are all, including these gentlemen, led by in their everyday life? In sum, by believing what others say and write; by leaning on their authority, namely on the fact that these other people have a given piece of information and pass it on to us. That is what happens in everyday life with regard to real events, many of which may also be checked through our personal experience. The matter is quite different when it comes to the mysteries of faith. Not only are we, and for that matter all others as well, unable to experience these in person, but we will in fact never be able to understand them fully with our reason or to grasp their deep-

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When it comes to defining human nature or the human person more precisely philosophers rack their brains.”

est meanings. Why? For the simple reason that these truths imply the concept of infinity. Thus, for example, on the 25th of this month, on the Feast of the Annunciation to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, we worship the incarnation of God: an infinite God becomes man. An infinite divine person and infinite divine nature form one being with a human nature. Even when it comes to defining human nature or the human person more precisely philosophers rack their brains. What then of a divine nature or a divine person? Here the idea of the infinite comes into play. Our intelligence, though, is far too small to be able to grasp it: even if it were millions and billions of times wiser, it would never be able to know the infinite. And why not? In fact even the sharpest created

intellect will always be finite and, for that very reason, unable to comprehend the infinite. When, on a beautiful evening, we lift our eyes to the glittering stars, a question creeps into our mind: What lies beyond them? There must be other stars, other nebulae. And beyond those, farther, farther still? We do not know. In any case, there can be no borderline “fence,” since space probably extends well beyond such a “fence.” We realize that we may not be able to venture out into the infinite with intelligence, or to grab it with our reason. Therefore we only say that there are no limits, that is, we deny the existence of limits. And that is all there is to our imperfect idea of infinity, which is expressed by way of negation. What could we possibly respond, then, to the question: Can there possibly exist a being, who is at

the same time infinite God and limited man? By only straining our intelligence we get lost, just as we do when we strive to reach the “border” of infinite space through reason. At that point, any mind, even the most penetrating, yet still limited, is lost and unable to utter anything. The only answer is: I do not know. Who, then, can teach us about that? Only One whose understanding is infinite, and therefore able to penetrate that truth, and that person is precisely and only God Himself. He and *He only* can thus tell us. Only He can reveal it to us. As a result, these truths *must* to our limited minds remain a mystery. Our minds may only know about them what God deigns to reveal, to His greater glory, for our salvation and sanctification.

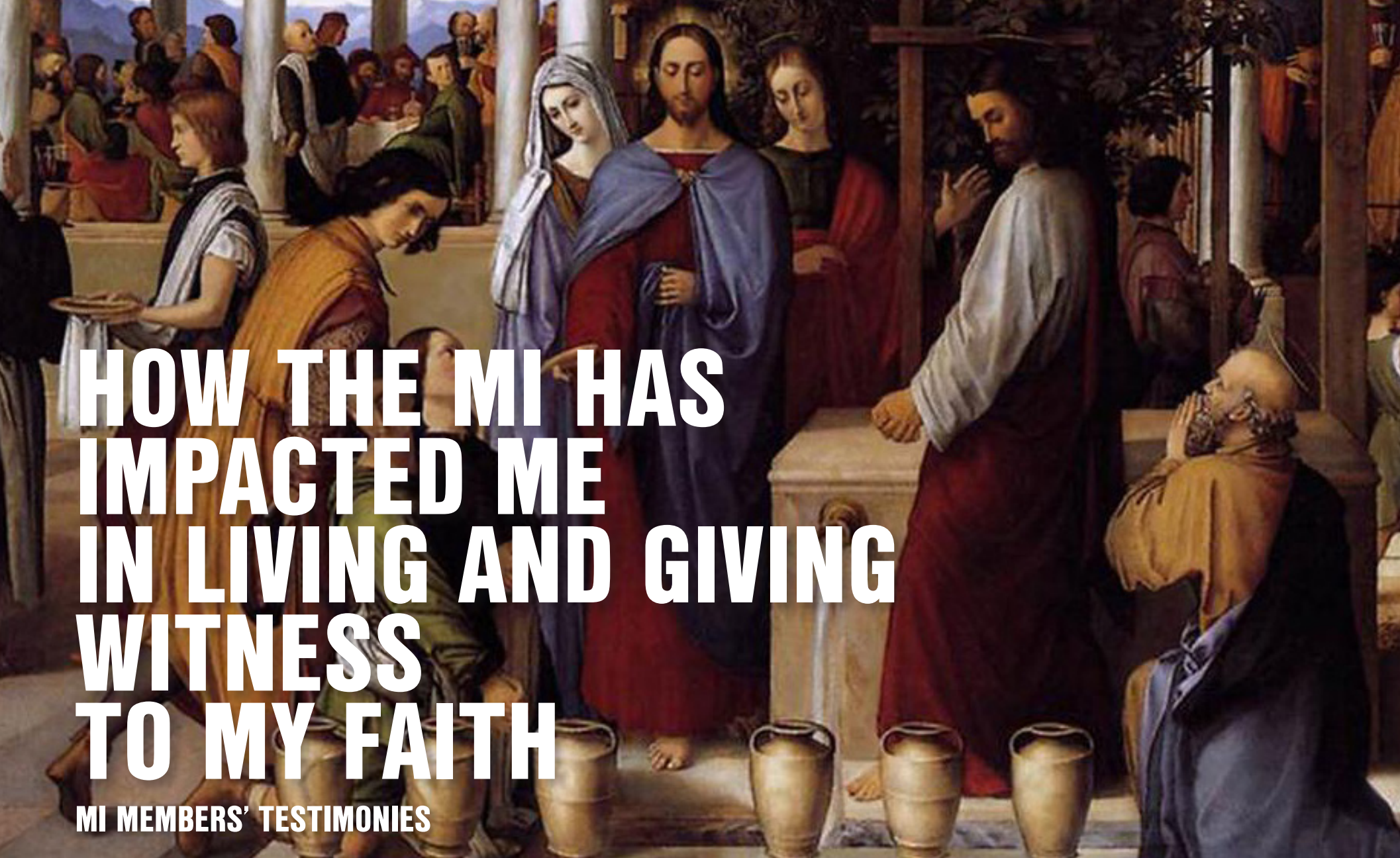
Rycerz Niepokalanej



“With patience I can do all things in Him who strengthens me [Phil 4:13] through the dear hands of the Immaculata... I can even become a saint. Courage, then, and go forward in patience and loving faith.” (KW 987)

“As a convert to Catholicism, I haven’t understood Mary’s role in my life as a Catholic. Through the daily emails I receive from the MI, I have come to know and love our Mother. I pray I will continue to grow and understand how she helps us on our journey and how to truly honor her in a way that pleases Jesus.” - A Subscriber

Maximilian Kolbe



HOW THE MI HAS IMPACTED ME IN LIVING AND GIVING WITNESS TO MY FAITH

MI MEMBERS' TESTIMONIES

How has the MI impacted me in living and giving witness to the faith; putting into action my desire to make a difference in the world? Being part of the MI family has helped me immensely! Reading the daily reflections received by email and the MI e-publication has given me the desire to pray to Mary more and to better see her as a great help and a gift from God. I am moved to pray more, express love more often, and think about how I can do that. Mary was chosen from the beginning to be a vehicle to bring us the Savior and she fulfills this role for us ongoing. We must remember this: to say "yes" to the will of God and not to self is to imitate Mary and our Lord. I want to do that! To ask Mary for help is pleasing to God and I feel she can make our petitions beautiful and powerful. Jesus did what she asked at the wedding of Cana! As Mary does not proclaim her own greatness, which is God-given, she can help us to do the same and magnify the Lord. I want to be like Mary. I want to be all of the good things that Mary is: such as humble, kind, gentle, quiet (I talk too much), thoughtful, and a long-suffering woman. I want to be full of grace to do and be all of the things that will bring me closer to God and move me to worship and adore Him without ceasing. I want all of



St. Maximilian Kolbe's writings help me to see that we need to want to give ourselves to Our Lady for her to act in us and through us."

this for other people, too. And I want them to realize how wonderful Mary is and what she did and does for us. How could anybody not love Mary and see how she brought us Jesus; how she served and serves God first; and how she can help us to do the same? I tell people that. Mary is the Gate of Heaven! Jesus gave us Mary as our mother as He was dying on the cross. And He gave all of us to her. Jesus wants us to have a special relationship with His mother Mary! She can help us to "Do what he tells you." She can help us grow in love and understanding and truth and holiness. St. Maximilian Kolbe's writings help me to see that we need to want to give ourselves to Our Lady for her to act in us and through us. Hearing Mary, John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb. With Mary acting through us,



A Senior's Prayer

just think of the effect she can have on those around us! The Maximilian Kolbe meditations that I receive help me to love Mary and desire to bring all people to the Lord through Mary. Again, God chose Mary from the beginning of time to bring the Lord to the people. We can ask for Mary's help to do that NOW! Being part of the MI family has elevated my faith life. The Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe are an inspiration. I want to grow in love and holiness. I think a lot about that for myself and for others. I believe that Mary can help me and those around me—through me. And, I am moved to go around saying, "Let me tell you about Mary"

- Carol Baverstock, Raleigh, NC

Oh gracious God, You have given me all that I am and have, and now I give it all back to you to stand under Your will alone. In a special way I give You these later years of my life. I am one of those called by You into old age, a call not given to all, not given to Jesus, not given to most in our world today. I humbly ask You to grace me deeply in each aspect of that struggle. As my physical eyesight weakens, may the eyes of my faith strengthen that I may see You and Your love in everything. As my hearing fails, may the ears of my heart be more attentive to the whisper of Your gentle voice. As my legs weaken and walking becomes more difficult, may I walk more truly in Your paths, knowing all the while that I am held in the embrace of Your love. As my mind becomes less alert and my memory fades may I remain peaceful in You, aware that with You there is no need for thought or word. You ask simply that I be there with You. And should sickness overtake me and I be confined to bed, may I know myself as one with Your Son as He offers His life for the salvation of the world. Finally, as my heart slows a little after the work of the years, may it expand in love for You and all people. May it rest secure and grateful in Your loving Heart until I am lost in You completely and forever. Amen.

** I received this prayer from a lovely 96 year old woman in MA. I love the prayer. Being 84 myself, I can relate to almost everything in it. My eyesight has weakened, my hearing is just beginning to fail, I can't walk as far as I used to and there are a few other things. If I could write, this would have been my prayer and I will continue to pray it for the rest of my life in union with Our Lady. —Faith Phillips, Elk Grove Village, IL*

LENT WITH OUR LADY

“MARY KEPT ALL THESE THINGS, REFLECTING ON THEM IN HER HEART.” (LK 2:19, CF. LK 2:51)

These verses unlock for us the secret to Our Lady’s journey of faith toward Easter! Yes, Our Lady is the Immaculate Conception, the only human creature completely free from sin and full of grace, but, as Scripture shows clearly, she did walk her pilgrimage of faith day by day to the foot of the Cross, to Easter Sunday and beyond! I would encourage you to read and meditate on the beautiful Encyclical Letter that St. John Paul II wrote about Our Lady, *Mother of the Redeemer*, and to discover his brilliant insights. During this Lenten journey, I would like to consider what these two verses reveal. First, the verb “kept,” in the Greek language used by St. Luke, is in the imperfect tense, which indicates an ongoing action. In other words, this was Our Lady’s usual disposition. Mary habitually “kept these things” in her heart, not only during the infancy and childhood of Jesus, but throughout her whole life alongside Him. This “keeping” was not a passive way but rather a very active way of embracing and retaining “these things.” In fact, the same Greek verb *suntereo* has the same powerful meaning as in Lk 8, where we find the parable of the Sower. Jesus says: “But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, *embrace it with a*

generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance” (Lk 8:15). “These things,” in Greek mean both word and event. Therefore, Mary “kept” and actively retained and embraced in her heart both words and events. The second verb we encounter is “reflecting on” them, which is sometimes translated in other ways: treasuring or pondering. Again, the original Greek word is *sumballousa*, which suggests the idea of throwing together in the same place different things. It does not indicate simply to think about and to evaluate, but to come to the right interpretation thanks to an accurate work of comparing and interpreting. Think of a mosaic made of countless small pieces, all different in color and size. Our Lady treasured and kept in her heart all “these things,” that is, words and events pertaining to the life of her Son, and day by day compared and evaluated them, letting herself be led by the Holy Spirit to interpret and understand them. That is why we look to her as our Mother and Model on our journey of faith! She did not see the whole picture at once. She was a Woman of faith who embraced the mosaic of God’s marvelous plan as it was unfolding and she embraced the way He called her to take part in it and came to see how her little life was part of His grand Plan. We could say that the

“Your life is not about you. You are not in control. This is not your project. Rather, you are part of God’s great design.”

“Stay often with the Immaculata, converse with her often, linger one on one with her often, and you shall become more and more like her.”
St. Maximilian Kolbe

masterpiece which reveals the result of her ongoing “treasuring these things” in her heart, her faith journey, is her *Magnificat* (Lk 2:46-55). In the *Magnificat*, Mary sings of God’s work in her personal life and the life of the world and all humanity. Because of her perseverance in keeping-treasuring and reflecting-pondering all these things in her heart, she was able to see, discern and navigate through life with God’s eyes and embrace His ways. She was a Woman of faith. Bishop Barron reminded us in one of his daily reflections (February 17, 2020) that “Faith is an attitude of trust in the presence of God. Faith is openness to what God will reveal, do, and invite. It should be obvious that in dealing with the infinite, all-powerful person who is God, we are never in control. This is why we say that faith goes beyond reason. If we can figure

it out, calculate precisely, predict with complete accuracy, we’re in charge—and by definition, we are not dealing with a person. One of the most fundamental statements of faith is this: your life is not about you. You’re not in control. This is not your project. Rather, you are part of God’s great design. To believe this in your bones and to act accordingly is to have faith.” That is what Our Lady did and taught the Apostles, the early disciples and Christians throughout the centuries, including St. Maximilian. That is what she still teaches us to do as we embark on our journey of faith with her through our total consecration! This transpires from every page of St. Maximilian’s writings. Enjoy the journey and let God’s Word and the words of St. Maximilian inspire you.

Antonella Di Piazza, FKMI



Daily Holy Mass
will be offered throughout 2023 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



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.

March

*O Immaculata,
please intercede...*

*That Lent may be a favorable time
to live a sober and generous
lifestyle, cultivating a trusting
prayer and a hope that is renewed
every day.*

Is 58:6-7 - Is this not, rather, the fast that I choose: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking off every yoke? Is it not sharing your bread with the hungry, bringing the afflicted and the homeless into your house; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own flesh?

KW 1028 - Penance is not the exclusive privilege of St. Paul [1 Cor 9:27] nor an "error" of the Middle Ages, but a duty: a bounden duty of all, for no one is without sin.

Reflection - The beginning of an authentic conversion consists in accepting with humility the reality of one's weakness and sinfulness. Only if we are aware of our own misery, we turn with humble confidence to God's Mercy and become compassionate and merciful toward others.

As MI Knights, with the help of the Immaculata we should strive to embrace Lent as a favorable penitential time. Sustained by constant prayer, penance will help us to overcome our selfish ego and to open ourselves to others with generosity. During Lent, the Church invites us to practice *prayer, fasting and almsgiving*. Through prayer, we deepen our union with God. Fasting, that is, voluntarily abstaining from food and unnecessary goods, teaches us to grow in self-knowledge and self-control. Almsgiving makes prayer and fasting blossom into charity, as we go out of ourselves and reach out to our brothers and sisters in need. May this Lenten season be a time to assess our thirst for God, our generosity of heart, and our readiness to be compassionate toward the less fortunate and the vulnerable in our world.

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



Check the MI website
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 a virtual MI Village and live out your consecration with others. Email Moderators for information.

****Moderator: Scott Richard**

Email: 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

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

Mtg Day: Every Friday evening

Mtg Time: 8:00pm-9:00pm MST

****Moderator: Bill Bielawski**

Email: william.bielawski@gmail.com

Mtg Day: Sunday (3rd Sunday of each month)

Mtg Time: 7:00pm CST

****Moderator: Lisa Fulgenzi**

Email: drilisafmi@gmail.com

Write to request Google Meet join info

Mtg Day: Wednesdays

Mtg Time: 8-00-9:00pm EST