

THE KNIGHT OF THE *Immaculata*

E-PUBLICATION OF THE MILITIA OF THE IMMACULATA, USA

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100th Anniversary of the First MI Magazine

Three Special Days...

by Ronald L. Rodrigues, MI National President

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! As I write this article, I look out at the beauty that God has provided for us. It's a beautiful fall day here in Alabama. For some it may appear almost winter. But here in Northern Alabama the leaves have turned, and it is beginning to cool. The nights are cooler and days are getting shorter. The trees are red, yellow and gold, aged with beauty. Their time is near, with winter just around the corner, when the leaves return to earth and the trees appear to have reached their journey's end. I enjoy this time of year as it brings a picture of the beauty that God created.

It is also a time of Thanksgiving, where we all come together to give thanks for the many blessings we have received, including of course, the great food, turkey and dressing, cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie. It's a time for the family to unite and share memories, to visit those whom we haven't seen all year, to toast a glass of wine and tell each other what a blessing they are to us and express are love to others. Fall can also be thought of as a reminder of the time in our lives when we are, so to speak, in our third phase, a time when we have matured and seasoned, have grown wise and our pilgrimage on earth is narrowing. Our journey toward God is on track and our mind is focused on what really matters. The earthly things are less important. We strive to adhere to one of the goals of the MI, that we all become saints. What a challenging task! Indeed, it is one that requires a lot of help along the way. As for me, often I am tempted to think I may never reach such great heights. I am sure many feel the same way, but thankfully, we have been blessed with a lot of help along our path.

As the leaves fall and the tree begins to look barren, creation becomes a reminder that our life eventually will also come to an end. Our earthly path will

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“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

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cease to exist. Our journey will soon fade out as the sun sets and darkness settles upon us. We have run to our earthly life's end. But the good news is, we know the Light will be as the summer sun, as we reach our heavenly Homeland and glory.

As we celebrate three special days in the Church calendar: All Souls Day, All Saints Day, and the Feast of the Miraculous Medal, let us focus on what they may mean to us.

On the Solemnity of All Saints, we celebrate the Church's Saints and our loved ones that have reached their final resting place in Heaven, a glorious place prepared for them. Let us ask them to pray for us, to help us on our way. They are the Church Triumphant. The communion of saints includes the living and the dead, all those in Heaven or in Purgatory. When we pray the Apostles' Creed and say "I believe in the communion of saints," we are referring to all the children of God, including those who have died placing their hope in Jesus through their Baptism. It's a day we pray through the intercession of our favorite saints and our loved ones whom we believe and hope are in Heaven with God. St. Dominic said, "Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death, and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life."

There are many saints who can inspire us in addition to our own St. Maximilian Kolbe: St. Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church, St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Virgin Mary and the foster father of Jesus, St. Teresa of Avila, also a Doctor of the Church for her teachings on prayer, St. Anthony of Padua, known as the Saint of lost things, St. Therese of Lisieux, known for the little way, St. Padre Pio, who bore the stigmata and exhorted us to

"Pray, hope and don't worry," and the list goes on and on. Above all, we look to Our Lady, the Queen of All Saints.

I myself have always been fond of Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone, better known as St. Francis of Assisi. He spent his life trying to imitate Jesus, to do what Jesus told us to do. He was given the task of rebuilding the Church, to open our eyes once again to loving all our brothers and sisters. Let us always remember his words: "Once you leave this earth you can take nothing with you that you have received, but only what you have given."

A passage I hope all MI Members can remember this All Saints Day is one that inspires me and goes along with one of the main goals bestowed on us by St. Maximilian Kolbe, "that we all should become saints." If in doubt remember, "All Saints have a past and all sinners have a future." Let us ask our Founder, St. Maximilian Kolbe, for guidance and help on our way to win the world for the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Maximilian Kolbe wanted to suffer on this earth for Jesus through the Immaculata. He had said his pain was that, once he reached Heaven, he would no longer be able to suffer for Christ. He wanted to do all he could while on earth and accepted pain and suffering as a gift. He did everything for love to the Immaculata. "If your suffering were to increase even one degree your glory in Heaven for all eternity, then it would secure an infinite benefit. Life passes quickly, even suffering passes, while eternity will last forever. It is worth it." (St. Maximilian Kolbe)

On All Souls Day, let's pray for those who have died and are being purified in Purgatory, that is, the Church Penitent or Church Suffering. As we celebrate this special day, may it be a day of love and prayer for those that have passed, not a day of mourning. Our loved ones are on their way but need our prayers to reach their final resting

place in Heaven. May we always remember them and hold them in our hearts. Let us remember this great Saint, Maximilian Kolbe, who devoted his life to the Immaculata on both All Souls and All Saints Day. Let us never forget his sacrifice. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13). Let us strive to live our total consecration to our Blessed Mother and in doing so become saints.

On Nov 27th we celebrate the Feast of the Miraculous Medal, the day our most Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to St. Catherine Laboure and asked her to have a medal made, assuring her that

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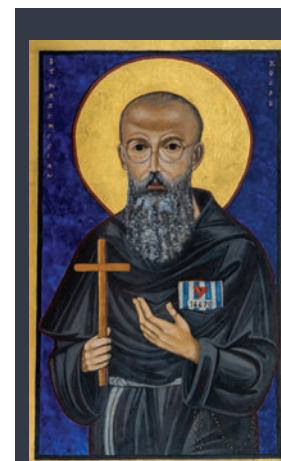


Daily Holy Mass

will be offered throughout 2022 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:

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Editorial: Three Special Days... by Ronald L. Rodrigues, MI National President

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she would give great graces to everyone who wore the medal with faith. The Miraculous Medal was originally called the Marian Medal. Over time many good things happened for those who wore the medal, so people began to call it the Miraculous Medal. Father Kolbe had a great love for the Blessed Mother and as part of establishing the Militia of the Immaculata he wanted everyone to wear the Miraculous Medal as a sign of our consecration to Mary. This was to be our reminder to always live for Jesus through Mary and fall under her protection. He asked that we recite the Miraculous Medal prayer daily and give the medals out to all who are in need. St. Maximilian Kolbe once said “Give the Marian medals to those who don’t believe or are indifferent to religion, the Immaculata will find a way to convert those individ-

uals.” During the German occupation of Poland Father Kolbe would hand out Miraculous Medals to the German soldiers assigned to Niepokalanow. It was his hope that it would bring them to God, but also it assured them the intercessory protection of the Virgin Mary. Let us continue to live our lives with the goal of bringing all persons to the love of Jesus through Mary.

Finally, may I ask all the Knights of the Immaculata to *join in our Novena in honor of the Immaculate Conception*, that begins on the 29th of November leading up to the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8th. On this special day, as Knights of the Immaculata, may we renew our consecration and our dedication to Mary. Let us continue on our journey to win the world for Mary!

Ronald L. Rodrigues
MI National President

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.

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Surrounded by a Great Crowd of Witnesses

Excerpts from an essay on the Communion of Saints by Fr. Rev. O.R. Vassal-Phillips

Our religion has two sides, the corporate and the personal. Every man's religion is his own personal affair, and consists essentially of his direct relations with God. And yet he reaches God, and God reaches him, often and intimately through the body of the Church, which is the Body of Christ. So is it with our lives. Each one comes into the world alone, each one leaves the world alone. Alone each one has one day to stand before the dread judgment seat. There is something infinitely pathetic in the loneliness of every human soul. And yet, just as the grace of God, though it is in a true sense a matter between each man individually and his Maker, must by divine ordinance be sought by that man through other men—through external sacraments, ministered by a human priest—so is the loneliness of life tempered by human society....

Catholics should and do remember that they are members one of another, and above all, members of Christ. Christ is the Head of the Body to which we belong. Our life, then, has to be modeled on His life,

who is our Head. In one sense the life of Christ was a life of unutterable loneliness. Yet he had an earthly home, a home he left only to do his Father's will, to be about his Father's business. He spoke pathetic words: "The birds of the air have their nests and the foxes their holes, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."

But even while He was thus speaking He had friends—Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, Martha who from time to time received Him in her house, and others of whom we read in the Gospels. He had disciples, one of whom to the end of time will be known as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." In early life a foster father was given Him, specially chosen for the high office of protecting Him in infancy and childhood, who surely was dear to his Sacred Heart. Above all He had a mother. Mary of Nazareth was the mother of our Lord. No other woman could call Him son by right. In one sense—and that a most special sense—He could share her with no other. He bestowed upon her the love, unique of its kind, that every child owes

to the mother who bore him in her womb. She gave to Him and only Him that love that a mother bears to the child who has drawn his life and blood from her veins—from the chalice of her heart.

Yet in another and equally true—if less close—sense, He shares her with us. She is our mother too, for we are His brothers and sisters, redeemed from sin by that precious Blood which flowed from off the cross beneath which she stood on Calvary. Mary loves us with a mother's love, for we belong to her family—she will disown none whom her Son is not ashamed to call His brethren, and we owe and give her the love that is hers by right, both as the mother of our Lord and as the mother of all who belong to Him....

And as the Mother of God is our mother too, so the saints and friends of God are our friends also. Believing then in the communion of saints, believing that death does not hamper the activities of the soul, the Church encourages her children to invoke the saints, reigning together with

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Christ—above all to invoke our Blessed Lady. Are they not His friends and ours? Is she not the Mother of God and the Mother of men?

Protestants are accustomed to bring two main objections against this consoling doctrine. It is urged that Catholic teaching interferes with the mediatorial office of Christ—that while Paul says that there is one mediator, Catholics make many; and also that we can have no certainty that the saints in heaven hear our prayers on earth; that Catholics make the Blessed Virgin and the saints ubiquitous, an attribute that belongs to God alone.

We will consider these objections separately. It is quite true that we read in the sacred scriptures that as Moses was the mediator of the Old Testament between God and man, so is Christ the mediator of the New Testament (Deut 5:5; cf. Gal 3:19) and that “there is one God, and one mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5). It is also true that this is elementary Catholic doctrine, taught to every Catholic child in every Catholic school throughout the world. But it is by no means true, and most certainly Paul does not say that because Christ our lord and savior is the mediator between God and man in one sense, it follows that we His creatures cannot mediate with Him for one another in quite another sense. On the contrary, we shall find on examination that Paul uses the fact that we have a mediator—who is the one mediator between God and man—as a great argument why we should mediate for one another in His name. The sentence “There is one God and one mediator between God and man” does not stand alone. It is preceded by the word “for”—that is, “because.” The apostle had just urged that “first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men”—in other words, that we should mediate one for another. As a reason for thus acting he reminds us that we have a mediator, who is one as God is one. Through Him alone can we go

to God. But through Him we can go, and can go with confidence, and should go not only on our own behalf but also pleading one for another...

We who dwell yet on earth—as well as the saints and the Blessed Virgin in heaven—are “mediators of grace”; but Christ alone is “the mediator of justice.” He alone has a right to be heard. Through Him Christian men and women, the saints, and Mary pray with much confidence. And their prayers are heard in proportion to their confidence, in proportion to their nearness to God, to their sanctity. “The prayer,” writes St. James—he is writing of the prayer of mediation one for another—“of a just man availeth much” (Jas. 5:16). The nearer to God, the surer the answer to prayer. This is the reason why Catholics seek so earnestly the prayers of the saints; above all why they implore the prayers of the Blessed Virgin. Who so near to Him as His saints, who ministered to Him so faithfully on earth and who now can sin no more? Above all, who so near to Him as the sinless Virgin on whom He first smiled in the crib of Bethlehem and who was His last earthly thought on the cross of Calvary? The saints are His servants. Mary is His servant; she is also His mother.

The New Testament is full of exhortations to *intercessory prayer*. It is practiced by all Christians. What Christian mother fails to pray—to “mediate”—for her son, or imagines that by thus acting she derogates from the supreme mediation of the one mediator, through whom she approaches the throne of God?... No Protestant is shocked when he reads the declaration of Paul that by becoming “all things to all men” Christ hoped to “save some” (1 Cor 9:22). When men use words—such words, for example, as “mediator” and “save”—everything depends upon the sense in which they use them. For Catholics the sense of these words is not arbitrary but is fixed by the first principles of their religion.

It seems to me that all difficulty with regard to the intercession of our Lady and the saints ought to vanish as soon as it is understood that their intercession does not differ in its nature from the intercession that all Christians should make on earth for their friends and, if they listen

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





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to the exhortation of the apostle, “for all men.” After the Ascension of Christ His mother lived in the house of John. Her prayers for the beloved disciple possessed the same character after her death as those she offered for him during her life.

The intercession of the saints in heaven differs from the intercession of us poor sinners on the earth only in the fact that their prayers are more likely to prevail than ours because they are nearer to our Lord than we. Experience, as opposed to mere theory, proves that going to God together with his saints and his Blessed Mother, asking not only our friends on earth but also our friends and Mother in heaven to intercede for us greatly increases our confidence in Christ Himself.... But it may be urged, “You know that your friends on earth can pray for you. You can ask them to do so by word of mouth or by letter. How can you be sure that the saints in heaven can hear your prayers? They are gone beyond the reach of the human voice. You can have no communication with them. They are not ubiquitous. How then can they hear prayers put up at the same moment of time in different parts of the world?”

To this we reply simply, “I believe in the communion of saints.” It can be shown

that the Church has always believed, as she believes today, that the saints in heaven hear the prayers of their friends on earth; that, as the Council of Trent teaches us, “it is good and useful to invoke the saints reigning together with Christ” (Sess. xxv). To this truth the early inscriptions in the catacombs and the writings of the Fathers bear ample testimony. It is enshrined in the Apostles’ Creed. The communion of saints, in which we express our belief whenever we recite that Creed, involves not only the communion of Christians on earth in prayer and sacrifice and sacraments and good works, but also the communion of Christians on earth with those who have gone before them to the City not built with hands.... With regard to the saints, I know that they are not ubiquitous. I do not speak to their material ears; God enables their souls to know the yearning of my soul. How He accomplishes this I know not, and probably in my present state of existence could not understand. Catholic writers tell us that they who, like the saints, see God in the Beatific Vision, “in Him see all things that it is well for them to see,” and certainly hear the prayers of those who address them.

This we believe; it is part of our religion. It does not trouble us that we do not know the precise method by which the saints are

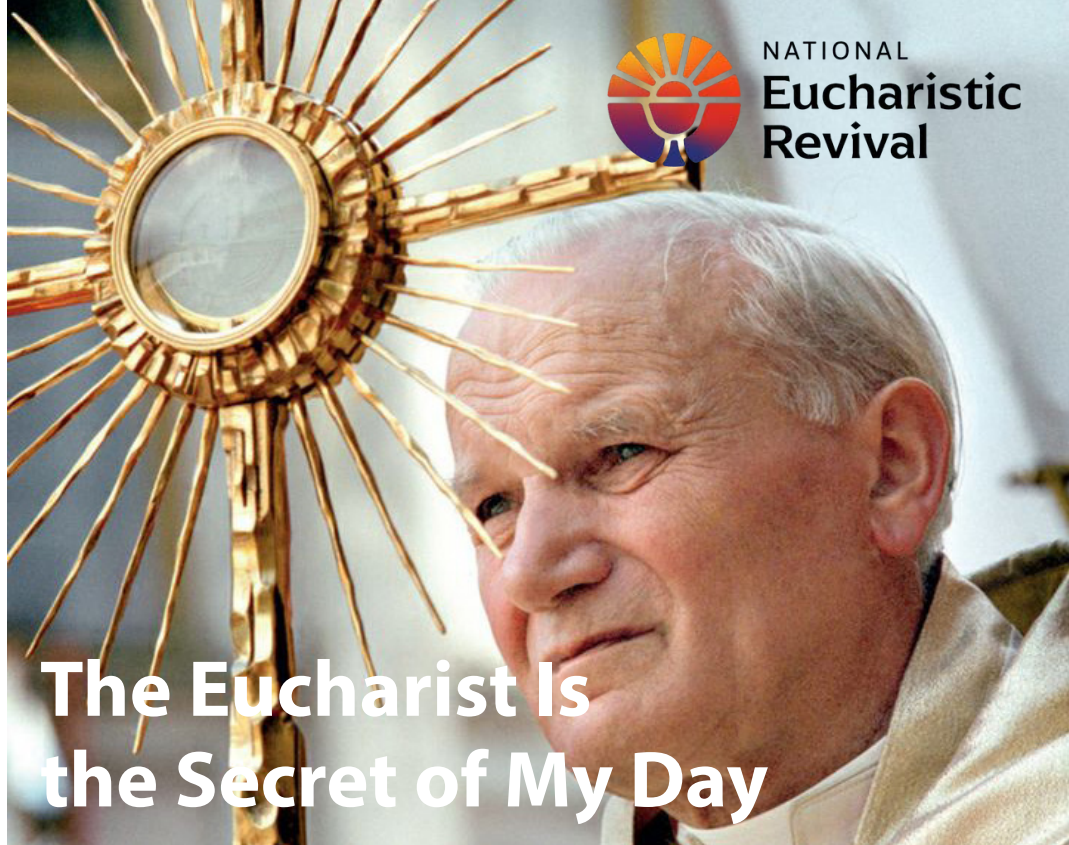
able to know the needs of many mortals all over the world at the same time. I can use wireless telegraphy, though I may be profoundly ignorant as to how it operates. In like manner I can pray to the Blessed Virgin, or to any saint, even though I cannot explain how our Lady or the saint to whom I pray is enabled by God to hear me. It is enough for me to rest upon my religion, and to believe—as by God’s Mercy and to my great comfort I do believe—in the communion of saints. But the communion of saints reaches beyond this earth to souls who are not in heaven, and yet are the friends of God and our friends too. We call them the holy souls in *Purgatory*.

The Catholic Church teaches that not all the friends of God—not all, that is, who die in the divine love and grace—are fit immediately after death to see his face and dwell with him eternally. For all God’s friends in need there is a period of purification beyond the grave that we call *Purgatory*. Moreover, we believe that these waiting souls can be helped by us on earth.... Inspired by the truth of the Catholic doctrine of the communion of saints, taught us in the Creed, we know that we are not alone, even when we may seem to be most alone. The everlasting arms are around about us. We are surrounded by a great crowd of witnesses. We can help the dead and the dead help us. It is not indeed taught by the Church as of faith that the souls in *Purgatory* can pray for us, though this is the reasoned conviction of great saints and theologians and seems to have been proved again and again in the experience of the faithful who receive wonderful answers to their prayers to the holy souls. It is of faith that the souls in *Purgatory* will one day reach heaven and that the saints in heaven pray for their friends on earth.

The Church that has given us so much has given us friends in the heavenly Country. Her saints raise their hands to help us. Over all the saints reigns their queen, our Mother. If we trust her now and seek her motherly aid in all our needs, one day beyond a doubt we shall see her with her Son. Then with her we shall adore, and with her we shall see the human features of her Child, Jesus—her God and our God, her Lord and our Lord.

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During this Eucharistic Revival, let us draw inspiration from the words of truth St. John Paul II addressed to young people and the way he engaged them during the National Eucharistic Congress held in Bologna, Italy, in September 1997.



The Eucharist Is the Secret of My Day

Dear Young People,

1. I am pleased to take part in this vigil which is being held in a context of faith and joy where singing plays an important role. It is the young people's faith and joy which I have been able to experience already on other occasions, especially during the great world meetings with youth. And I have noted with interest that after World Youth Day in Manila in 1995 came the European meeting in Loreto; after the recent meeting in Paris, we are meeting this evening in Bologna. It is young people who take the lead in this succession of meetings in various parts of the world. But then we always return to Italy. *Return* means that the Pope returns to the Vatican or to Castel Gandolfo. I take this opportunity to greet you with affection, dear young people, and I extend my cordial thoughts to all of Italy's youth.

We began our meeting, which I followed with great attention, with Psalm 96, an invitation to *sing to the Lord a new song*. It invites us to bless His Name, to rejoice and be glad together with all creation. Singing thus becomes the response of a heart filled with joy, which recognizes God's presence beside it.

The answers are blowing in the breath of the Holy Spirit!

You have remained here, visible Mystery: you have been repeating these words throughout the National Eucharistic Congress. Faith is also expressed in song. In our life, faith makes us sing the joy of being children of God.

All of you, artists and young people, whom I greet affectionately, express through music and song, on the lyrics

of our time, words of peace, hope and solidarity.

This evening music and poetry have spoken of the questions and ideals of your youth. This evening, by way of music, Jesus has come to meet you.

2. Dear young people, I thank you for this festive gathering which you wanted to organize as a sort of dialogue in several voices, where music and choreography help us to reflect and pray. A representative of yours has just said on your behalf that the answer to the questions of your life *is blowing in the wind*. It is true! But not in the wind which blows everything away in empty whirls, but *the wind which is the breath and voice of the Spirit*, a voice that calls and says: *Come!* (cf. Jn 3:8; Rv 22:17).

You asked me: How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man? I answer you: one! There is only one road for man and it is Christ, who said: "I am the way" (Jn 14:6). He is the road of truth, the way of life.

I therefore say to you: at the crossroads where the many paths of your

days intersect, question yourselves about the truth value of every choice you make. It can sometimes happen that the decision is difficult or hard, and that there is an insistent temptation to give in. This had happened to Jesus' disciples, for the world is full of easy and inviting ways, downhill roads that plunge into the shadow of the valley where the horizon becomes more and more limited and stifling. *Jesus offers you an uphill road*, which is heavy going *but lets the eye of the heart sweep over ever broader horizons*. The choice is yours: to let yourselves slide downhill into the valley of a dull conformism, or to face the effort of climbing to the peak, where you can breathe the pure air of truth, goodness and love.

We meet here in Bologna a little more than a month after the great meeting in Paris, and the theme of that World Day is still echoing within us: *Teacher, where are you staying? Come and see*. This is the invitation I also address to you: *come and see where the Teacher lives*. This Congress in Bologna tells us that *He lives in the Eucharist*.

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The Eucharist Is the Secret of My Day

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3. I hope that you too, with Simon Peter and the other disciples, can meet Christ and ask Him: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life* (Jn 6:67).

Yes, *Jesus has the words of eternal life; everything is redeemed and renewed in Him*. With Him it is truly possible to *sing a new song* (Ps 96:1) at this vigil before the great feast that we will end tomorrow with the celebration of the Eucharist, the culmination of the National Eucharistic Congress.

Now I would like to tell you something personal. With the passing of time, the most important and beautiful thing for me remains the fact that I have been a priest for more than 50 years, because every day I can celebrate Holy Mass! *The Eucharist is the secret of my day*. It gives strength and meaning to all my activities of service to the Church and to the whole world.

In a short time, when it is the dead of night, the music and singing will give way to silent adoration of the Eucharist. The music and singing will be replaced with silence and prayer. Our eyes and hearts will be fixed on the Eucharist.

Let Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament speak to your hearts. It is He who is the true answer of life that you seek.

He stays here with us: He is God with us. *Seek Him without tiring, welcome Him without reserve, love Him without interruption: today, tomorrow, for ever!*

Finally, I must tell you that during this vigil I have thought of all the rich-

es that exist in the world, especially those in man: the voices, the insights, the answers, the sensitivity and many, many other talents. We must be deeply grateful for all these talents. And *this gratitude means precisely the Eucharist*. By giving thanks for the good things of this world, by giving thanks for all these riches, by giving thanks for all these talents, we make ourselves better able to multiply all these talents, just like the good servant in the Gospel... But *this thanksgiving must be made through the sacrifice of the Cross*; it must be made through the bloody death of Christ. If there were no death, there would be no Resurrection either, nor would there be the paschal mystery. I wanted to tell you this to round out your vision of what the Eucharist means.

St. John Paul II

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,
President of the USCCB

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 Villages News

MI Village Moderators Announcing an Online Formation Series

Dive in Search of Pearls: Introduction to The Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Starting on November 19, Antonella Di Piazza, FKMI, general editor of *The Writings of St. Maximilian M. Kolbe*, will facilitate an on-line four-session series on St. Maximilian's Writings.

Don't miss it! Watch for the link that will be sent to your email address.

By the way... Are you looking for a Christmas gift idea? Get a copy of the updated edition of *The Writings* from Marytowngiftshop.com or order the e-book from Amazon or Barnes&Noble.

New MI Village in Pensacola, Florida

With full support from the pastor of St. Paul Church, MI member Mike Hodges has established an MI Village at the parish.

The Village meets on First Saturdays at 9:30 A.M.

For more information, contact MI Moderator, Mike Hodges: mikethrives@gmail.com or call him at 850-418-1500.

New Location for Village of the Immaculata, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Village will now be meeting at the Basilica of St. Josaphat, Milwaukee, WI, on First Saturdays 9:30-11:30 A.M.

For more information contact MI Moderator: Kurt Keidl at kkeidlofs@gmail.com or Leslie at lesliemayer000@gmail.com

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

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: drlisafmi@gmail.com

Write to request Google Meet join info

Mtg Day: Wednesdays

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

IF
YOU WISH
TO BE MY
SON...



The Miraculous Medal Conversion Story of Prisoner Claude Newman (1944)

The following true story of Claude Newman took place in Mississippi in 1944. The account was told by Father Robert O'Leary, a priest from Mississippi, who was directly involved with the events. He has left for posterity an audio recording it.

Claude Newman was an African American man who was born on December 1, 1923 to Willie and Floretta (Young) Newman in Stuttgart, Arkansas. In 1928, Claude's father Willie took Claude and his older brother away from their mother for unknown reasons, and they were brought to their grandmother, Ellen Newman, of Bovina, Warren County, Mississippi. In 1939, Claude's beloved grandmother, Ellen Newman, married a man named Sid Cook. Soon Sid became abusive toward Ellen, which deeply angers Claude. On December 19, 1942, egged on by his friend Elbert Harris, Claude lay in waiting at Sid Cook's house (Sid Cook and Ellen Newman have since separated), shot Sid as he entered, killing him, and took his money, then fled to his mother's house in Little Rock, Arkansas. In January 1943, Claude was apprehended in Arizona and returned to Vicksburg, Mississippi, and made a coerced confession on January 13. Despite protests of Claude's lawyer Harry K. Murray, his confession was admitted as evidence, and he was found guilty by jury, and is initially sentenced to die in the electric chair on May 14, 1943. Later an appeal to retry the case was rejected by State Attorney General and he was rescheduled to be executed on January 20, 1944.

Claude receives the Miraculous Medal

While he was in jail awaiting execution, he shared a cell-block with four other prisoners. One night, the five men were sitting around talking and eventually the conversation ran out. During this time, Claude noticed a medal on a string around one of the other prisoner's neck. Curious, he asked the other prisoner

what the medal was. The young prisoner was a Catholic, but he apparently did not know (or did not want to talk) about the medal, and seemingly embarrassed, he appeared angry and suddenly took the medal off from around his own neck and threw it on the floor at Claude's feet with a curse and a cuss, telling him to "take the thing." Claude picked up the medal, and after looking it over, he placed it around his own neck, although he had no idea whose image it was on the medal; to him it was simply a trinket, but for some reason he felt attracted to it, and wanted to wear it.

The Blessed Virgin Mary appears to Claude

During the night, while sleeping on top of his cot, he was awakened with a touch upon his wrist. Awakening with a start, there stood, as Claude told Father O'Leary afterward, *the most beautiful Woman God ever created.*

At first he was quite frightened, not knowing what to make of this extraordinary beautiful glowing Woman. The Lady soon calmed Claude down, and then said to him, "If you would like me to be your Mother, and you would like to be my child, send for a priest of the Catholic Church." And after saying these words She suddenly disappeared. Excited, Claude immediately started to yell "a ghost, a ghost," and started screaming that he wanted a Catholic priest.

Father Robert O'Leary SVD (1911-1984), the priest who tells the story, was called first thing the next morning. Upon arrival he went to see Claude who told him of what had happened the night before. Deeply impressed by the events, Claude, along with the other four men in his cell-block, asked for religious instruction in the Catholic faith.

Fr. O'Leary returned to the prison the next day to begin instruction for the prisoners. It was then that the priest learned that Claude Newman could

neither read nor write at all. The only way he could tell if a book was right-side-up was if the book contained a picture. Claude told him that he had never been to school, and Fr. O'Leary soon discovered that his ignorance of religion was even more profound. He knew practically nothing about religion or the Christian faith. He knew that there was a God, but he did not know that Jesus was God. And so Claude began receiving instructions, and the other prisoners helped him with his studies.

After a few days, two of the religious Sisters from Fr. O'Leary's parish-school obtained permission from the warden to come to the prison. They wanted to meet Claude and hear his remarkable story, and they also wanted to visit the women in the prison. Soon, on another floor of the prison, the Sisters began to teach some of the women-prisoners the catechism as well.

A heavenly lesson about Confession

Several weeks passed, and it came time when Fr. O'Leary was going to give instructions about the Sacrament of Confession. The Sisters too sat in on the class. The priest said to the prisoners, "Ok boys, today I'm going to teach you about the Sacrament of Confession." Claude said, "Oh, I know about that! The Lady told me that when we go to confession we are kneeling down not before a priest, but we're kneeling down by the Cross of her Son. And that when we are truly sorry for our sins, and we confess our sins, the Blood He shed flows down over us and washes us free from all sins."

Hearing Claude say this, Fr. O'Leary and the Sisters sat stunned with their mouths wide open. Claude thought they were angry and said, "Oh don't be angry, don't be angry, I didn't mean to blurt it out." The priest said, "We're not angry Claude. We are just surprised. You have seen Her again?" Claude replied, "Come around the cell-block away from the others."

When they were alone, Claude said to the priest, "She told me that if you doubted me or showed hesitancy, I was to remind you that lying in a ditch in Holland in 1940, you made a vow to Her which She's still waiting for you to keep." And, Fr. O'Leary recalls, "Claude then told me precisely what the vow was."

Claude's revelation absolutely convinced Fr. O'Leary that Claude was telling the truth about his visions of Our Lady. The promise Fr. O'Leary made to Our Lady in 1940 from a ditch in Holland (the proof Claude gave the priest that Our Lady really was appearing to him) was this: that when he could, he would build a church in honor of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. He did just that in 1947. He had been transferred to Clarksdale, Mississippi, in 1945 when a group African American Catholic laymen asked to have a church built there. The Bishop of Natchez, Mississippi, had been sent \$5000 by Archbishop Cushing of Boston for the "Negro missions." The Bishop and Fr. O'Leary commissioned

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CLAUDE NEWMAN
CONSIDERED PRISONER

The Miraculous Medal Conversion Story of Prisoner Claude Newman (1944)

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the church of the Immaculate Conception to be built, and it is still there today. Fr. O'Leary then returned to the catechism class on Confession. And Claude kept telling the other prisoners, "You should not be afraid to go to confession. You're really telling God your sins, not the priest."

Then Claude said, "You know, *the Lady said that Confession is something like a telephone. We talk through the priest to God, and God talks back to us through the priest.*"

...And about Holy Communion

About a week later, Fr. O'Leary was preparing to teach the class about the Blessed Sacrament. The Sisters were again present for this lesson too. Claude indicated that the Lady had also taught him about the Eucharist, and he asked if he could tell the priest what She said. Fr. O'Leary agreed immediately. Claude related, "*The Lady told me that in Communion, I will only see what looks like a piece of bread. But She told me that It is really and truly her Son, and that He will be with me just as He was with Her before He was born in Bethlehem. She told me that I should spend my time like She did during Her lifetime with Him—in loving Him, adoring Him, thanking Him, praising Him and asking Him for blessings. I shouldn't be distracted or bothered by anybody else or anything else, but I should spend those few minutes in my thoughts alone with Him.*" As the weeks progressed, they finished the catechism instructions and Claude and the other prisoners were received into the Catholic Church on January 16. Soon afterward the time came for Claude to be executed. He was to be executed at five minutes after twelve, midnight, on January 20, 1944.

The sheriff, named Williamson, asked him, "Claude, you have the privilege of a last request. What do you want?" "Well," said Claude, "all of my friends are all shook up. The jailer is all shook up. But you don't understand. I'm not going to die... I'm

going to be with Her. So, then I would like to have a party." "What do you mean?" asked the sheriff. "A party!" said Claude. "Will you give Father O'Leary permission to bring in some cakes and ice cream and will you allow the prisoners on the second floor to be freed in the main room so that we can all be together and have a party?" "Somebody might attack Father," cautioned the warden. Claude turned to the men who were standing by and said, "Oh no they won't, right fellas?"

The warden consented and posted additional guards for the party. So, Fr. O'Leary visited a wealthy patron of the parish, and she generously supplied the ice cream and cake, and everyone enjoyed the party. Afterward, because Claude had requested it, they made a Holy Hour, praying especially for Claude and for all of their souls. Fr. O'Leary brought prayer books from the church, and they all said together the Stations of the Cross, and made a Holy Hour, without the Blessed Sacrament.

As the time neared for Claude's execution, the men were put back in their cells. The priest then went to the chapel to get the Blessed Sacrament so that he could give Claude Holy Communion in the moment before his execution. Father O'Leary returned to Claude's cell. Claude knelt on one side of the bars, the priest knelt on the other, and they prayed together as the clock ticked toward Claude's execution. Fifteen minutes before the execution, sheriff Williamson came running up the stairs shouting, "Reprieve, Reprieve, the Governor has given a two-week reprieve!"

Claude had not been aware that the sheriff and the District Attorney were trying to get a stay of execution for him, to save his life. But when Claude found out, he started to cry. The priest and the sheriff assumed Claude's reaction was that of joy because he was not going to be executed. However, Claude said, "But you don't understand! If you ever saw Her face, and looked into Her eyes, you wouldn't want

to live another day!" Claude then continued, "What have I done wrong these past weeks that God would refuse me my going home?"

Fr. O'Leary then testified that Claude sobbed as one who was completely brokenhearted. Bewildered, the sheriff then left the room. The priest remained and Claude eventually quieted down, then Fr. O'Leary gave Claude Holy Communion. Afterward Claude said, "Why Father? Why must I still remain here for two weeks?" Fr. O'Leary then had a sudden inspiration. He reminded Claude about James Hughs, a white prisoner in the same jail who hated Claude intensely. This prisoner had led a horribly immoral life, and like Claude he too was sentenced to be executed for murder. James was raised a Catholic, but now he was a reprobate, and rejected God and all things Christian. Fr. O'Leary then said "Maybe Our Blessed Mother wants you to offer this denial of being with Her for his conversion." And the priest continued, "Why don't you offer to God every moment that you are separated from your heavenly Mother for this prisoner, so that he will not be separated from God for all eternity?" Claude thought for a moment, then agreed, and he asked Fr. O'Leary to teach him the words to make the offering. Fr. O'Leary complied, and he later testified that from that moment on the only two people on earth who knew about this personal offering were Claude and himself, because it was a private matter between God, the Blessed Mother, Claude and himself. A few hours later (still on the morning after his reprieve of execution) Fr. O'Leary came once again to visit Claude, and Claude said to the priest, "James hated me before, but oh Father, how he hates me now!" (This was because James had heard about Claude's reprieve and was jealous.) To encourage him the good priest said, "Well, perhaps that's a good sign."

During his two weeks reprieve, Claude generously offered his sacrifice and prayers for his fellow prisoner, the reprobate James Hughs. Two weeks later, on February 4, 1944, Claude was finally put to death by the electric chair. Concerning Claude's holy death Fr. O'Leary testified: "I've never seen anyone go to his death as joyfully and happily. Even the official witnesses and the newspaper reporters were amazed. They said they couldn't understand how anyone could go and sit in the electric chair while at the same time actually beaming with happiness." His last words to Father O'Leary were, "*Father, I will remember you. And whenever you have a request, ask me, and I will ask Her.*"

Yet another conversion

Three months later, on May 19, 1944, the white man named James Hughs—the man whom Claude had offered his sacrifice for—was to be executed. Fr. O'Leary said, "This man was the filthiest, most immoral person I had ever come across. His hatred for God and for everything spiritual defied description." He would not allow a priest or any clergyman

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in his cell. Just before his execution, the county doctor pleaded with him to at least kneel down and say the "Our Father" before the sheriff would come for him. The prisoner spat in the doctor's face. When he was strapped into the electric chair, the sheriff said to him, "If you have something to say, say it now." The condemned man started to blaspheme. All of a sudden, he stopped speaking, and his eyes became fixed on the corner of the room, and his face turned to one of absolute horror. Suddenly he screamed in terror—a horrible scream that shocked everyone present. Turning to the sheriff, he then said, "Sheriff, get me a priest!" Now, Fr. O'Leary had been in the room because Mississippi law at that time required a clergyman to be present at executions. The priest, however, had hidden himself behind some reporters because the condemned man had threatened to curse God if he saw a clergyman. Upon calling for a priest, Fr. O'Leary immediately went to the condemned man. The room was cleared of everyone else, and the priest heard the man's confession. The man said he had been a Catholic, but turned away from his religion when he was 18 because of his immoral life. He confessed all of his sins with deep repentance and intense fervor. While everyone was returning to the room, the sheriff asked the priest, "Father, what made him change his mind?"

"I don't know," said Fr. O'Leary, "I didn't ask him." The sheriff said, "Well, I will never sleep tonight if I don't ask him."

The Sheriff went to the condemned man and asked, "Son, what changed your mind?"

The prisoner responded, "Remember that black man Claude—the one whom I hated so much? Well, he's standing there [and he pointed], over in that corner. And behind him with one hand on each shoulder is the Blessed Virgin Mary. And Claude said to me, 'I offered my death in union with Christ on the Cross for your salvation. She has obtained for you this gift of seeing your place in Hell if you do not repent. I have been shown my place in Hell, and that's why I screamed.'"

James Hughes was executed as scheduled, but the heavenly appearance of our Blessed Mother with Claude Newman and the subsequent vision of hell had instantly converted his soul in the last moments of his life. With the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Fr. O'Leary had taught Claude to unite himself with the suffering of Jesus by offering his own sufferings to Him, just as we all can do for others, and Claude's suffering helped to pay the price for James' remarkable last-minute conversion and repentance. Therefore, we must never under-estimate the value of our suffering joined with that of Jesus Christ's, and also the power and loving intercession of Our Blessed Mother in heaven.

Icons "Mary the Teacher" © Copyright 2004 Brother Claude Lane, OSB Mount Angel Abbey



From MI Members

Corpus Christi, Texas

Marie writes:

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Militia of the Immaculata,

I just wanted to share with you some recruiting work going on down south in Corpus Christi, TX. On Friday, October 7, 2022, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, a kind lady named Sandra allowed me to place MI recruiting packets in her store.

This store is called Love Note. It is a Catholic & Christian, Gifts & Church Supplies shop. The packets include the following items: 1) The Miraculous Medal MI brochure, 2) A Divine Mercy prayer card, and 3) A Miraculous Medal necklace.

Thank You, Blessed Mother. Something else wonderful happened. Though I found out, today, that I definitely need to move to Houston, due to wanting to care for my brother who has fourth stage lung cancer and men-

tal disabilities, I also found out that a Deacon I know from my church is also a member of the Militia of the Immaculata and he has agreed to replenish the MI recruiting packets in the Love Note. Thank You, Dear Blessed Mother.

I plan to continue with the recruiting when I move to Houston, TX.

Sincerely grateful to be a Recruiter for the MI,

Marie A.

Simi Valley, California

MI member Paul Franck, notwithstanding his health limitations, takes to heart the call to share the gift of total consecration with everyone he meets! He has disseminated hundreds of MI prayer books, *Glory to God Through the Immaculata!*, along with the MI brochure, and has introduced as many people to Our Lady's MI Family. He is truly an MI missionary!



St. Maximilian Writes...

These valuable texts are part of the year 1940 drafts *For a Book*.

The Militia of the Immaculata is called *of the Immaculata* because its members give themselves up without reserve and in every respect, without exception, to the Immaculata. They wish to be her servants and children and slaves of love, her possessions and property and docile instruments, and all that the love of her may at any time suggest to the heart of any person who loves her. In a word, they desire to belong to her in every aspect, to be hers to fullest extent of the meaning of that expression.

And they never thought of it differently, all those hearts, in love with her, which at any given time have given or currently give themselves up to her, under various titles. Each of them has wished and wishes to express to their own Lady, Queen, and most beloved Mother, the desire to belong to her in the most perfect way possible.

It also is called *Militia*, or *Knighthood*, because those who devote themselves so completely to the

Immaculata wish to lay emphasis on their intention to remove any restriction not only with regard to the extent but also to the intensity of their self-oblation. By doing that they intend to emphasize their desire to burn more and more ardently out of love of her; to radiate even more in the world around them; to illuminate with their splendor and kindle with their enthusiasm the greatest possible number of souls that at any time may approach them. As knights, they wish to win over to the Immaculata, and as soon as possible, the whole world and every soul without exception.

The letters “MI,” deriving from the Latin name “Militia Immaculatae,” is the international abbreviation of the name for this association. (KW 1327)

As with any movement toward an ideal, so also in the Militia of the Immaculata specific organizational form pertains strictly to its essence, although such forms help to coordinate efforts aimed at the

achievement of the goal. There are those who have known the Immaculata, loved her, given themselves up to her, and so thoroughly that they have left behind or saved nothing for themselves; there are those who do all they can to become her property in every respect, and those who, in their zeal for her Kingdom in souls, wish others to give themselves up to her as well and, for their part, spare no efforts to achieve that goal and see to it that no possible means is neglected, even if that were to cost them much or even if they were faced with the prospect of sealing their ideal with blood. In fact, as their utmost happiness, and peak of all their aspirations, they consider they ought to offer full sacrifice even of their lives to the purpose of winning over to her all the souls, truly all, wherever they are, whichever nationality or race they belong to and in whatever time they may live, now or in the future: these, evidently, are perfect Knights of the Immaculata, even if they never heard of the association of the Militia of the Immaculata and were never enrolled in one of its registers. The Militia of the Immaculata was approved by the Apostolic See... Each person, therefore, may become a part of the association of the Militia of the Immaculata, even if he already belongs to other associations, or even if he is a member of a religious institute. (KW 1332)

Fr. Maximilian Kolbe

fr. Maximiliano M. Kolbe



MI Intentions - November

This year, the monthly reflections provided by the MI International Office on the 2022 MI Intentions include:

*A Scripture reading.

*A text from St. Maximilian Kolbe's Writings.

*A quote from the Pope's teachings.

*A brief commentary.

The goal is to offer MI leaders the possibility to adapt the material to the need of the group and/or the current reality.

October: *O Immaculata, please intercede that, especially during Advent, we may await with joy the second coming of the Lord, witnessing our loyal dedication to you.*

Lk 24:25-35 – Jesus said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

KW 499 – How short life is, is it not? Let us sell it, or rather give it up, offer it dearly, at the highest price possible. The greater the suffering, the better, because after death one can no longer suffer. The time in which one can manifest love is brief. And then we live ONCE ONLY!

How many of you desire to consecrate themselves *without limits* to the Immaculata? Let us offer ourselves to her every day, all the time, in practice, fulfilling her will... This

means being an *instrument* in accordance with the way of thinking of the MI.

Pope Francis on Advent – Advent is the season for remembering the closeness of God who came down to dwell in our midst. Let us make the traditional Advent prayer our own: *Come, Lord Jesus...* We can say it at the beginning of each day and repeat it often, before our meetings, our studies and our work, before making decisions, in every important or difficult moment of our lives. Advent is both a time of God's closeness and our watchfulness. It is important to remain watchful, because one great mistake in life is to get absorbed in a thousand things and not to notice God. Saint Augustine said: *I fear that Jesus will pass by me unnoticed.*

Commentary

Like the disciples of Emmaus, let us strive to listen attentively to the Lord, to recognize His presence in our midst, and to proclaim Him to others by our lives, especially during this Advent season.

Prayer: Act of Total Consecration to the Immaculata

MI RESOURCES

Available from the MI National Center



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

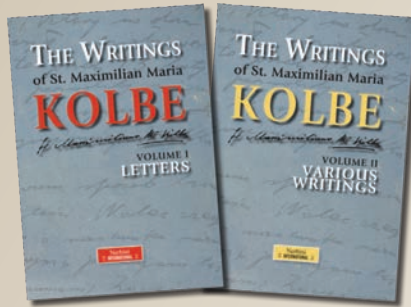
Miraculous medals and various MI brochures can be requested from the MI National Office at 331-223-5564 or via email: MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

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— Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, OFM Conv

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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