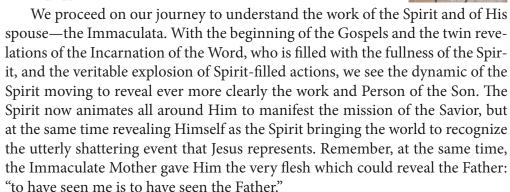


# More on the Spirit and the Bride

By John W. Galten, MI National President

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria!



St. John the Baptist, his own conception a miraculous event, is anointed to be the last and greatest of the prophets and the Precursor to the Christ (who is the anointed One). He announces that this Jesus "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mt 3:11). As Jesus is baptized by St. John: "behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him, and behold a voice came from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3: 16-17). The very nature of God is revealed as Trinitarian love and the Spirit of that love is coming down upon Jesus. The Son can gift the Holy Spirit because He has the Spirit to give.

As the Gospel account on the life of Jesus continues, the Holy Spirit moves Simeon in the Temple to announce that the Savior, the glory of Israel, and rev-

(continues on pg. 2)



"The goal of the MI (the abbreviation comes from the Latin Militia Immaculatae, or Militia of the Immaculata) is, in fact, to make sure that all become saints. In all this activity, what strikes the eye most of all is its Marian thrust. This is a consequence of a precise understanding of the mission of the Immaculata." (KW 1220)

#### **Editorial**

(continued from pg. 1)

elation to the Gentiles, has arrived and begins the work of salvation so long hoped and longed for. Simeon adds to Mary that she has an indispensable and crucial role in this salvific plan, that is, that her sufferings united with His should be the paradigm of all redemptive suffering, down to and including our own. Here, I think, we see the invitation to St. Maximilian, the red crown of martyrdom offered to him by the Immaculata, bound up in Simeon's words to Mary. He, like her, "pondered" these things in his heart as she did, wondering as she did how this would be accomplished.

As Jesus is about to begin his public ministry, we see the Holy Spirit move Him to go into the desert to confront Satan—the murderer of souls, the enemy of Man and God: "and Jesus, full of the Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit" (Lk 4:1). In His own power, endowed with the guidance and strength of the Spirit, Jesus defeats Satan and resists his temptations. The crushing of the serpent's head has begun.

Does not this work of the Spirit reveal to us, His Church, how the Spirit works in our lives? After all, we possess the same Spirit as does the Christ. Let us pause and give ourselves a chance to think about a few things. Are we led by the Spirit? Do we act in concert with the Spirit to defeat the Devil and sin? Are we docile to the prompting of the Spirit? Are we not by grace Temples of the Holy Spirit? Do we not have to "ponder" more often in prayer the extraordinary gift of the Divine Indwelling of the Trinity initiated by our Baptism and bountifully increased by all the Sacraments?!

Too often we do not judge rightly the magnificent power and gifts poured into us to live our Christian life enabling us to witness to this gift in the New Evangelization called for by Our Mother, the Church, and by Our Blessed Lady, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of that same Church.

Dear Knights, make some time this month to ponder what has been effected in our Catholic life, that is, how the infinite love of God in the form of the Spirit has been poured into our hearts from the wounded side of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. And hopefully we can realize with Elizabeth the full magnitude of the gift: "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with the loud cry, 'Why is it granted to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Lk 1:41-43). Such is the meaning of our Total Consecration.

Dear Knights of the Immaculata, until next month, "Let us arise and be on our way!"

John W. Galten MI National President

P.S. Please, let others know about our monthly MI e-newsletter and the daily Kolbe emails and invite them to sign up on the MI website.



#### **Daily Holy Mass**

will be offered throughout 2020 for the MI-USA and all MI Members 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

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

suggested donation for The multiple copies of the new booklet is \$2.00/ea. plus shipping; for a single copy, the suggested donation is \$3.75 shipping included.

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"We learn to surrender ourselves into Our Lady's hands as docile children."

I am so grateful for the opportunity to participate in the MI Young Adult Retreat at the end of December. In the busyness of life and my work as a youth minister I had been longing for a time and space to step away from everything and just have some quiet prayer time with the Lord, moments for journaling and reflection, and a time to be spiritually nourished and cared for myself without having to worry about planning things or being in charge.

This retreat did just that and was full of many graces from Our Lady, one of which was that I left with a renewed enthusiasm and peace in my relationship with the Lord!

Claire Simeo, Youth Minister

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This past Christmas, I attended the MI Young Adult Retreat at Marytown retreat house in Libertyville, Illinois. Although I have been consecrated to Mary for years, entering the MI and experiencing this retreat helped me to realize that this relationship is not lived alone! Mary has many children, and I have many brothers and sisters who share this consecration with me.

This question was put before us: "What is God asking you to say 'fiat' to in 2020?" After hearing the story of Venerable Satoko Kitahara, I am moved to make a greater gift of myself in 2020 by extending friendship to those I am not inclined to.

Ad Jesum per Mariam! Jared Rutnick, Seminarian Diocese of Joliet

+++

Before coming to the MI Young Adult Retreat, I was anxious about many things. Some were things beyond my control, others about important decisions I need to make regarding the discernment of my vocation. While I still very much loved Jesus, my heart was overwhelmed by a lot of things. Since I had a long drive (I live in the Columbus area), I had a lot of time to pray. Indeed, a gas station clerk the Lord put in my path a few years ago told me that he treats his car as his "mobile sanctuary." I took to heart these words. As I prayed the Rosary on the way, listened to praise and worship music, and prayed in other ways, I felt a freedom overshadow me that I had been missing for a long while. This is going to be a good retreat, for I'm already experiencing the fruit of it and it hasn't even started, I thought.

This ended up being the case, but not in the way I had anticipated. I had noticed at various points along the way that my car was acting strangely, but I had brushed it off. Eventually, though, when I was well on the way through Indiana, my car started to shake and I smelled burning oil. That was the breaking point. I remember feeling so helpless; here I was pulled over on the side of a busy freeway in a different state with cars zooming by, going on with their lives as if my tragedy didn't matter. What was worse, I did not know the right numbers to call for roadside assistance. But then the hand of God came through. Within two minutes, a police officer arrived to help me. He directed me to a dealership nearby to get my car assessed.

I went to the dealership, and after waiting quite some time, my hopes were crushed to be informed that my car "was leaking oil like a sieve," (looking back, I think this was an exaggeration). Worse yet, it was a Friday and they were closing in 20 minutes. Plus, they would have to wait for a part to come in. I began to feel frustrated. Surely, God wanted me to attend this retreat. He had not brought me out all this way just to leave me hanging. Maybe he did want me to go back, though. Maybe his graces for me were elsewhere and he didn't want me to attend. After wrestling for a brief while, I decided to go ahead and drive to the retreat. I had to buy extra oil and stop every so often to refill if needed.

(continues on pg. 4)















(continued from pg. 3)

I arrived at the retreat house just in time for Mass, and I was filled with a sense of peace knowing that I was where the Immaculata wanted me, even if my nerves were a little bothered!

One of the retreat leaders said that this was going to be a very powerful retreat because many of the attendees had challenges. Two others had a family emergency that prevented them from coming and another fell ill the morning of and could not come. She thought Satan was putting a lot of obstacles because he knows how powerful Mary is and St. Maximilian Kolbe's witness to her.

My experience more than confirmed that. With the consolation of knowing that Mary brought me out of such dire straits, I felt the hand of Divine Providence more tangibly. I also experienced in the other retreatants, in the ample time for prayer (indeed, the grounds of the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe are very beautiful and prayerful), and in the content of the retreat the surpassing love of God. My fire for God was rekindled and I experienced a new ease and desire for sharing the Gospel. Indeed, Mary blessed me with many opportunities to share the fruits of the retreat with the other young adults and after the retreat as well with people I know (and don't).

If God wants to say anything through this, I think that it's to entrust all things to Mary. She is a good mother and she wants her children to experience joy and freedom (Galatians 5:1) even when we "walk through the valley of the shadow of death" (Psalm 23:4). May we all give our hearts to her more fully each day; we will be amazed at the results.

David England, Seminarian Josephinum Diocese of Columbus

# Reflection on February MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that we may learn to be disciples who make attentiveness and docility their way of life.

"Give your servant a listening heart." (1Kings 3:9)

At the beginning of King Solomon's reign, around 970 bc, this young king had a dream during which God told him to ask whatever he wanted. It was a difficult decision to make, but Solomon's response was rooted on a certainty: the kingdom is God's gift. The young sovereign did not let himself be blinded by power. He was aware of his own lack of experience and need to learn the art of governing. He knew himself and to some degree knew God. A good starting point! Therefore, wisely he asked for himself a listening heart, a docile heart. Only a heart open to listening knows how to govern, because governing requires discernment, which in turn requires attentiveness, that is, an openness of heart, mind and will toward God, people and the events of life. Attentiveness is the result of an attitude of humility and docility.

The life of Our Lady was marked by this fundamental disposition in her relationship with the Lord, who made His plan known to her ever more deeply, day after day. Though young, Mary was familiar with the Word of God, the promises He had made to His people. At the Annunciation, she was thus able to discern that the time had come for the fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah's words: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign; the virgin will conceive and bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel" (Is 7:14).

Following her example, St. Maximilian Kolbe lived in an attitude of complete openness and docility to embrace God's will in everything. Young friar Maximilian learned to discern the will of God not only in the events of life, but especially in the will of his superiors: "Obedience and only holy obedience shows us with certainty the will of God" (KW 25). To be docile, however, does not mean to be weak or

unable to take responsibility for one's actions. On the contrary, docility teaches us to be attentive and to allow the will of God to manifest Itself in our lives, and makes us receptive to His graces. Thanks to this disposition of attentiveness, the light of God penetrates our souls and gives us the strength and courage to journey through life, to welcome our personal vocation and persevere in it.

We can always count on the Immaculata! She knows our weaknesses and needs. She intercedes for us and assists us on our journey as we strive to follow the loving will of the Lord.

During this month, we commemorate the appearances of Our Lady in Lourdes and St. Maximilian reminds us of the beautiful mission that the Immaculata continues to carry out in favor of her children. He wrote, "She lovingly attracts those who are sick in the soul, that is, unbelievers and sinners with an obstinate heart, and instills supernatural life in their hearts, to convince them of the power that she has to give us supernatural life. In addition, we must above all consider the fact that Christ works miracles precisely in a location (Lourdes) chosen by His Mother.... Therefore, the Immaculate Virgin confirms with facts what St. Bernard asserts in words: 'Such is the will of Him who wanted us to obtain all things through Mary" (KW 1229).

(from the MI International Office)



2020 **MI Intentions** leaflets are available in **English** and **Spanish** 

Request them from the **MI National Office** 

## 2020 **MI Missionary Year**



The MI International President, Angela Morais, declared 2020 to be the MI Missionary Year as we commemorate the 90th anniversary of St. Maximilian's embarking on the Japanese mission with a group of fellow MI Franciscan friars. It was February 26, 1930.

She wrote: "We want to invite everyone to a beautiful pilgrimage to Lourdes-France from September 25th to 27th this year. As we know, Saint Maximilian Kolbe visited Lourdes before going to Japan on mission. We want, as a consecrated MI family, go to Lourdes to thank for the MI and for all the gifts in many people's lives."

Details about the complete pilgrimage itinerary, registration and cost will be made known as soon as they become available.

Let us make 2020 a truly Missionary Year by deepening our whole-hearted dedication to Our Lady and her mission of winning every heart for the Sacred Heart!



# Kolbe, the Missionary

On February 26, 1930, St. Maximilian and four brothers embarked on a long journey to Japan, where they would establish the first MI mission outpost. The following is the first part of an abridged article by Fr. Giuseppe Simbula, OFM Conv.

Six years and five months is not a long time in itself. But this period, from February 26, 1930, to June 23, 1936, which Fr. Kolbe spent in Japan, was long indeed, because it was filled with amazing achievements, with many hopes and great dreams; many joys and many sorrows and difficulties of all kinds; enriching experiences and wonderful encounters. All these made it possible for St. Maximilian to develop the deep and confident understanding that all is God's work in the field of grace; human persons are asked only to surrender confidently to Him.

Despite the stressful work, exacerbated by difficulties with the environment and with the language, it was a period of prolific writing.... The greater volume of writings, in particular of Letters, is due to Fr. Kolbe's distance from his superiors and the need of a constant exchange with them, but also to the many problems and setbacks that the Japanese mission experienced every day.

Typically, when Fr. Kolbe is talked or written about, his exceptional features are emphasized: his great missionary achievements, his bold Marian doctrine, the ethereal heights of his mysticism. While confirming these aspects, the writings of this period show him coping with everyday issues, with troubles, doubts, uncertainties, suffering, humiliation, reproaches, complaints, accusations. Even he is subjected to psychological stress and always on the verge of collapse.

In a nutshell, the writings of the Japanese year reveal above all the human aspects of Kolbe, those aspects that make him close to each of us, for he also partakes of all our limitations. Yet at the same time they prove him outstanding, for even in these situations he

manages to be true to his principles and not be overwhelmed by the difficulties.

His stay in Japan can be divided into two periods. The first goes from his departure (for Japan, in 1930) until the 1933 Provincial Chapter of the Polish Province. In this period, in addition to teaching commitments, he worked as guardian, master of clerics and novices, director of the magazine Kishi, and so on. In the Provincial Chapter of 1933, instead, he was exempted from all positions of external responsibility to be able to provide spiritual guidance to the brothers, clerics and novices, and postulants; to teach some theological subjects, direct the MI worldwide, and produce and administer Kishi. In the first period, his responsibility over the brothers causes him much concern and suffering. In the second period, however, freed from responsibility over the brothers, he is much calmer, and in his writings he is able to explore some key aspects of the MI.

But let us proceed in order.

Who and what pushed Fr. Kolbe to missionary commitment in a pagan land?

The Church in those years witnessed an awakening of missionary spirit and activity. Within the Order of the Friars Minor Conventual, too, the need for renewed commitment in this field gains increasing acceptance. After the opening of the Chinese mission in 1925, mainly by the friars from Sardinia, in 1929 the Province of the Marches organized sending their own friars to Zambia, while on May 31 of the same year, the General, Fr. Alfonso Orlini, in a circular letter, urged the brothers to expand the missions and promote vocations. All these facts may well have nourished Fr. Kolbe's resolve to open an MI mission on behalf of his Province, for he was always very attentive to the directives of the Church and of his religious superiors. But our Saint was driven less by such external circumstances than by the consistency with which he lived the MI spirit, as he himself suggests in a report on the Japanese mission written for a Polish magazine, where, providing reasons for the origin of the mission, he makes no mention of circumstances but emphasizes that missionary activity is inherent in the MI ideal.

What is striking in this man is the supreme coherence, the swiftness of decision, the prompt execution of what he considers to be the Will of God. The Japanese period sheds even greater light on the exceptional inner strength of this man. There is no trouble of any kind that could possibly thwart his resolutions to do good. A few moments of nostalgia for the homeland, of dejection and fatigue, but then he throws himself headlong into work again in he name of the Immaculata and for the salvation of all.

#### St. Maximilian in Lourdes

As he was preparing for the Japan mission, Fr. Kolbe made a unique pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi, Turin, Padua, Paris, Lisieux, and Lourdes. The following are some of his notes from his journal about the visit to Lourdes on January 30.

Thurs. 30th—Lourdes: to the Cave by streetcar. Holy Mass at a side altar of the crypt. I put my signature in the register. At the Cave: the atmosphere is enchanting: rain keeps falling; crutches attest to graces received; candles (dripping) allude to prayers there said; a third part of the Rosary, then sadness, as is often found there. I go out: it continues to rain and there is no shelter. I go to the "bureaux," but instead of doctors I find counters for Holy Mass offerings and subscriptions to their weekly magazine; I subscribed. I make inquiries about trains: at 5 with no 3rd class. I also ask about currency exchange (I make a terrible mess of French, or rather I lack words and [the ones I do know] do not connect to one another). Sadness. In the meantime the offices have closed, because it is noon, so I go out again in the rain. I am starving. Where shall I go?

I go to the station by streetcar to make inquiries about trains: there is a 2:29 afternoon express to Bordeaux, arriving in Paris at 3 in the morning. I go back to say goodbye to my Loving Mama. Joy and happiness fill my heart. At the same time, I start thinking that, even in missions, dejection may often arise. Yet that is necessary. What am I seeking, after all? Comfort, perhaps? ... I came back happy, drank the miraculous water, put my finger under the water jet, bid farewell to my Loving Mother, commended everyone and everything to her in spirit, kissed the Holy Rock and: Goodbye, Loving Mama; a few postcards, then to the station by cab. Money exchange?! [I eat] something at the station restaurant (4.50 francs) and then to the platform.

The train departs. I start writing, look up, and there it is: the train takes me right in front of the Cave, on the other side of Gave. I stop writing and, for as long as the Cave and the Basilica are visible, I hold conversation with my Loving Mother, telling her that I am all hers, body and soul. In the meantime, the Gave, whose water also carries that miraculous spring, has accompanied me this far, as if it were a delegate of the Immaculata sent to wave goodbye. And now it is taking its leave too. What tenderness on the part of the Immaculata! If I had not taken the Bordeaux train, I would not have experienced such comfort. As I set down to write more notes, the mountains that protect these blessed sites keep bidding me farewell. With their snow-covered peaks they send me their final goodbyes. The Gave reappears and momentarily skirts the train tracks. Once again it disappears in the distance, while the pale sun shines forth its warmth.

Glory be to the Immaculata! I surely did not expect such goodbye when I walked away from the Cave, saddened and worn out in the patter of raindrops. But it was better this way. As the Immaculata wishes.

St. Maximilian Kolbe, KW 990B



As a volunteer with the MI National Center, I have been blessed by communication with MI Villages across the country. I have heard some amazing testimonies of how different villages are organized and even where they meet, yet all with the same purpose of bringing souls to Jesus through Mary.

Here are just a few examples. Kathleen in California shares that everyday at noon the members of the Village she moderates recite a Memorare for the children of our country, for protection from the evils in our culture! Joe's Village in Pennsylvania gathers to celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph, on March 19 with a Holy Hour at their local parish including prayers to St. Joseph, testimonies by those attending, Bible reading, and concluding with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. As many as 30 people normally attend. Theresa, who moderates an MI Village in Missouri, shared how their Village meets once a month and usually has 20-25 participants. They are all senior citizens with ages ranging from 70 to 80. They are known by their pastor to be "prayer warriors" and are often assigned various intentions to pray for.

MI Villages can exist in parishes, homes, seminaries, or universities; anywhere that people desire to share their consecration in community. Villages can meet once a week, once a month, or several times per year. If the recommended format is followed, members of the group renew their consecration, pray the Rosary, reflect on the writings of St. Maximilian and may intercede for one another or

spend time before the Blessed Sacrament. Most MI Villages meet for 1-1/2 to 2 hours each gathering. The MI monthly newsletter is a great source for articles and reflections on St. Maximilian's writings or the monthly MI intention in a group setting.

If you have ever thought of forming a group, consider asking yourself the following questions:

- 1. Am I being nudged in prayer to consider starting a Village?
- 2. Am I a practicing Catholic and have I registered as an MI member with the National Center?
- 3. Who would I invite to participate in an MI Village or perhaps would come and learn about consecration to Jesus through Mary?
- 4. Where could gatherings be held that would be accessible for the number of people that would come?
- 5. How often would we meet?

If you have had thoughts such as these and can answer some or all of these questions, perhaps 2020 is the year to take the next step toward establishing an MI Village in your area!

Speaking of a new year, please remember to stay in contact with the MI National Center. If you have moved or changed your email address, please let us know. If you are an MI Village moderator, please complete and return an annual report for your Village. Take the initiative to make contact with the National Center and keep it apprised of changes in your address, email, or phone.

I look forward, in 2020, to more interesting conversations with all you good people across the USA!

Peace and all good in 2020! **Julie Elkinton** Liaison for MI Villages MICouncilJElkinton@MissionImmaculata.com

### **New MI Villages**

#### **Central New Jersey MI Village**

Where: St. Agnes Church, Clark, NJ When: Second Monday of the month at 7:00 pm

Contact: Jeff Zannetti at jeff.zannetti@gmail.com

#### St. Mary Mokena MI Village

Where: St. Mary Church, Mokena, IL When: First Saturday of the month,

8:00-10:30 am

**Contact:** Joseph Cascone at CasconeJoe@outlook.com

#### St. Joseph the Worker MI Village

Where: St. Joseph the Worker, Beal City, MI

When: First Saturday of the month Contact: Brenda Polk

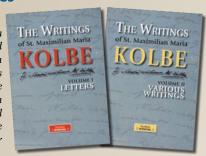
at BrendaJayne@hotmail.com

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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

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