

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



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New Year Blessings

The Holy Spirit and the Bride

By John W. Galten, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria!

I write this January editorial on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and shortly after the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Two great days, which celebrate not only the Immaculata but also the power of the Holy Spirit to effect two splendid actions: Mary's conception not only free from original sin but also full of grace. It also makes real the role of Mary as part of the New Evangelization. Of course, the middle term of these two events is none other than the event of all events: the Incarnation. God becomes man and enters our history with the gift of salvation.

We have seen in the Old Testament how the seeds of the Spirit's identity were planted, scattered here and there in the history of Israel. Now, in the opening pages of the New Testament, the full blooming of these seeds begins to be revealed in Luke 1:33-35. We hear the simple, but extraordinary revelation of the Holy Spirit in response to Mary's question: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the Child to be born will be called holy, Son of God." In this action by the Holy Spirit, His most stupendous action, He conceives the thrice-holy Son of God, from the holy flesh of the Immaculata. This conception takes place from the inmost depth of Divine Love, the very heart of the Trinity. No wonder, then, that this Child is the Holy One of Israel.

We see more clearly now a number of things about the Holy Spirit. First, that He is a Person, a Divine Person, who not only has the power to create be-

(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)

ing but to create the holiest of beings: the Immaculate Virgin Mother and the thrice-holy Son of God. Third, whatever He creates is created from love as He is the Divine Love of the Father and the Son. His love is creative in the deepest possible manner.

Now we begin to see dimly, but growing ever more clearly, in the Gospels the outlines of His Person and work. We shall see His task to reveal Jesus and to draw all humanity to Him in collaboration with His mystical spouse, the Immaculata.

We shall see unfolding in the New Testament this work revealed in history with the founding of the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit and given Mary as Mother, model and conduit of all grace.

It is upon this foundation that all of human history is built, directed and given a new meaning—a meaning so rich in depth that St. Paul calls it a New Creation. The bright light of this new dawn in time is called Christ and its horizon is called hope, for sin and death have been vanquished and we have been redeemed. And who facilitated this miracle of miracles? The Holy Spirit and the Bride. He by making holy and she by her perfect, faithful response, by bearing the Son of the Most High and by becoming the Mother of all mankind.

In this knowledge, how can we not respond with the words of the hymn, “How can I keep from sing?” Indeed, “I will be singing all the days of my life.”

Until next month, “Arise, let us 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

There is no time like the present to support the MI Mission with a contribution.

We need and depend completely on your support!

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Please join in prayer for the MI National Assembly, June 12-14, 2020

We need to hear from you to make our MI Family grow and be a more effective evangelical tool in Our Lady's Hands!

Please take time to respond prayerfully to the following questions by letter or email to MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

- Have the MI resources (monthly e-newsletter, daily Kolbe quotes, website information) been helpful for your ongoing growth in living your total consecration to Our Lady?
- What else should the MI seek to provide in terms of support and ongoing formation for individual members?
- *Leadership Formation* is a crucial objective for the growth and effectiveness of the MI mission. Please share your ideas concerning possible contents and format.
- The mission of the MI is “to win all hearts for Christ through the Immaculata.” What are your suggestions to make progress in achieving this goal?

Feel free to add any additional comments, ideas or questions you may have. Thank you taking the time to reply and make your voice heard!



"She said no words... but I understood everything."

On January 20, 1842, Baron Théodore de Bussières and his wealthy young friend, Alphonse Ratisbonne, a Jew from Strasbourg, walked into the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, in Rome.

Ratisbonne had been traveling throughout Europe as he was engaged to be married, and stopped in Rome. He had been raised away from religion and claimed not even to believe in God nor to have ever opened a book about religion. And yet, he reluctantly accepted a Miraculous Medal from his devote Catholic friend, Baron de Bussières, a convert from Protestantism.

During their earlier conversation, in fact, Ratisbonne defiantly tried to put down Catholicism, but the Baron seemed to remain strong in his belief and simply asked Alphonse to indulge him in a "harmless test," that is, to carry the medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Alphonse Ratisbonne was taken aback. In his own account (reported by St. Maximilian in several of his writings, e.g., KW 1057, from which I am freely quoting), he confessed that he would have never expected such a proposal. "At first I wanted to burst out laughing and shrug it all off, but then it occurred to me that the scene would make a good story to be told in the memories of my trip. So I decided to accept the medal, which was placed around my neck. When I had it on my chest, I burst into a loud laughter and said: 'Oh! Oh! Now I am a Catholic, Apostolic, Roman.' Baron de Bussières had a look of benign triumph on account of the victory he had obtained, but nevertheless wanted to take full advantage of it, and said: 'Now, we will need to complete the test. It consists in reciting morning and

evening the *Memorare*, a very short prayer and most effective with the Virgin Mary. It was composed by St. Bernard.'" Well, of course Ratisbonne knew nothing about the prayer and at that point wanted to stop the nonsense and begged the Baron to let go of the whole matter. The Baron, however, was undeterred, suggesting that if he rejected that short prayer the whole test would fail.

Ratisbonne continued, "Since I did not attach great importance to the whole



thing, I promised I would recite the short prayer. He went to look for it right away and asked me to write it down. I accepted, but on the condition that I would keep the original and give him back my own transcript of it. In fact, I wanted to enrich my personal journal with that new 'pledge of justice.'"

The two men parted. Ratisbonne spent the evening at the theater, forgetting about the medal and the prayer. Back home, though, he found a note from the Baron, who had stopped by to return his visit and to invite him once again to his

home before his imminent departure.

Ratisbonne did accept to meet him again. They visited Christian sites together and of course ended up discussing religious topics. Ratisbonne couldn't restrain himself from mocking even the most serious things, but the Baron "seemed quite indulgent and unperturbed.... He went so far as to speak in these terms: 'Despite your anger, I am sure that sooner or later you will become Catholic, because deep in your person there is that natural and sound judgment which assures me that you will let yourself be enlightened by God, even if He has to send one of His angels from heaven.'"

Little did Ratisbonne know that the Lady etched on the little medal would "set out" to meet him on a Roman winter day. And so it happened.

On that memorable January 20, 1842, Ratisbonne casually met with Protestant friends in a café. Upon leaving, he came across the carriage of Théodore de Bussières, who in turn invited him to take a walk. As they approached the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, the Baron excused himself for a moment, saying he needed to attend to a matter there. A dear friend of his had died suddenly and the funeral was to be held in that church. Ratisbonne, instead of waiting outside, decided to walk in and visit the church.

"After I crossed the church... I suddenly felt a restlessness and saw some kind of veil in front of me. It seemed to me that the whole church had plunged into darkness, except for a chapel. It was as if all the light converged there. I turned my eyes toward the chapel from which that dazzling light came. Within it, on the altar, I saw the Blessed Virgin Mary: standing, live, grand, majestic, beautiful, and full of mercy, her bearing similar to the one on the effigy on the Miraculous Medal of the Immaculata. At the sight, I fell on my knees where I stood. I tried to lift my eyes up to the Holy Virgin several times, but respect and a dazzling brightness forced me to look down. That did not prevent me, however, from seeing the light radiating from the apparition. I focused my gaze on her hands and saw in them an expression of forgiveness and mercy.

(continues on pg. 4)



**"She said no words...
but I understood
everything."**

"In the presence of the Blessed Virgin, although she said no words to me, I realized the horror of the situation I was in, the wickedness of sin, the beauty of the Catholic religion; in a word, I understood everything."

Upon his return, Théodore de Busières found him kneeling with his head leaning on the rail of the chapel in which the Blessed Virgin Mary had appeared, flooded with tears.

Alphonse Ratisbonne reported what had happened and requested to undergo preparation for Baptism. He was baptized shortly after. His whole life turned around, he later discerned his call to the priesthood, which eventually led him to found the Congregation of Our Lady of Sion. Most fittingly, his resting place (see photo) is now in Ein Karem, the little town where Mary went "in haste" to visit Elizabeth and Zachariah.

"She said no words" but he understood everything and embraced the Faith. What an amazing proof of how Our Lady continues to set out "in haste" and to reach out to all her children!

No wonder young Friar Maximilian Kolbe, upon hearing the story of this extraordinary conversion and being inspired to start the Militia of the Immaculata, would choose the Miraculous Medal as the sign of the MI total consecration to the Immaculata and the special means of every MI member's apostolate! In his *Writings* as well as in the memories reported by those who knew him, we may find countless stories of how he employed the Miraculous Medal in his own apostolate.

He often recalled the story of the appearance of Our Lady to St. Catherine Labouré and explained the message enshrined in the Medal, which is indeed a visual catechism about the Blessed Virgin Mary and her role in the Plan of Salvation.

Millions of Miraculous Medals have been distributed throughout the world and probably even more numerous are the wonders of grace that God's Divine Providence has deigned to shower upon all those who have received this humble token with faith and love. MI members have followed generously in St. Maximilian's footsteps. St. Mother Teresa, an MI member herself, was one of the champions of the Miraculous Medal, always carrying and handing them freely to everyone.

Our Lady promised that *"All those who wear it will receive great graces, especially if they wear it around their necks. I shall bestow many graces on those who will wear it with faith."*

Let's welcome her maternal invitation and not only wear faithfully our Medal as a reminder of our consecration and of our call "to become Mary" but also use every opportunity to introduce her to others by offering it as a *gift* that she herself revealed and urged to disseminate liberally.

Offer it especially to the sick and the afflicted.

We would do well to accompany the giving of the Medal with prayer, that the

recipient may welcome the love that is hidden within this humble tool. Nothing is too small for God to work His wonders through the mediation of the Blessed Mother!

If you have a personal story to share about the Miraculous Medal, do not hesitate to jot it down and share it. We can all draw inspiration from one another in the commendable race to make her evermore known and loved!

Antonella Di Piazza, FKMI



**Brochures, cards and
Miraculous Medals
may be requested
from the
MI National Center**

MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

Reflection on January MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that we may learn to surrender ourselves into your hands as docile children.

*“Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.
Let it be done to me according
to your word.” (Lk 1:38)*

For St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, “to surrender oneself” is not simply a word, but an authentic expression of faith and trust in Our Blessed Mother whom God has chosen, and in the plan He has entrusted to her. Our Lady, who welcomed in faith the Plan of God, is the perfect model of the disciple who strives to obey the Lord. She recognized that she was charged with a great mission, knew to be in the service of the Lord and declared to be completely available for Him. Moreover, she manifested the profound joy of trusting in God. The Greek verb that we translate as “Let it be done” expresses a desire and a joyful disposition. Mary did not accept with a sort of resignation, but rather she welcomed with enthusiasm and joy the will of God. She was happy and, as it were, did not desire anything more than to surrender herself into the Hands and Heart of God with full trust.

The example of Our Lady’s readiness, her docile, loving and unconditional surrender became the ideal of St. Maximilian’s life, a path he wanted to follow in relationship with the Immaculata, while inviting others to embrace it as well.

A month after his return from Japan to Poland, in June 1936, he felt the need to emphasize the goal of the whole activity of the Militia of the Immaculata and of each member: “The Immaculata: here is our ideal. To approach her, become like her, permit her to take possession of our heart and all our self, that she may live and act in and through us, that she may love God with our heart, that we may belong to her without any restriction: this is our ideal.” (KW 1210) The Blessed Virgin Mary’s surrender was the result of her awareness of being loved by God. Strengthened by this confidence, she allowed herself to be led

by the Holy Spirit in the day-to-day obedience to God’s plans. Thus she learned day after day the meaning of surrender to God.

Accordingly, St. Maximilian stated: “All that we are and whatever we have or can do, we have from God, and we receive that from Him every moment of our lives, because continued existence is nothing more than being continually granted such existence. By ourselves, therefore, we are unable to do anything, with the sole exception of evil, which is precisely lack of good, of order, and of strength.... Consecrate oneself *totally*, with *boundless* confidence to the hands of Divine Mercy, whose personification, by the will of God, is the Immaculata. Not rely on oneself but rather be afraid of oneself, trusting without limits in her and turning to her as a child to his mother every time one feels impelled to evil. No fall shall occur then.” (KW 1100)

In order to become authentic Knights of the Immaculata and experience the joy of belonging to her, each of us desires to introduce others to her, that they may draw closer to her “so that she might enlighten those hearts with an abundance of grace, warm them with the love of her motherly Heart, and kindle them with the fire of love toward God, toward the Divine Heart of Jesus.” (KW 1226) We realize, however, that we could not possibly undertake such a huge task alone. We understand that the Immaculata herself must act in us and through us among the people who live around us. Thus, we offer ourselves even more perfectly to the Immaculata as her property and docile instruments in her immaculate hands (cf. *Ibid.*).

As we strive to live this surrender, we will become able to say with Our Lady, “Here I am!” May God do with me as He wishes!

(from the MI International Office)

Congratulations to All Newest MI Members!



As announced, all over the country, at different locations, many people made their total consecration to the Immaculata on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: at Sacred Heart Seminary, Detroit, Michigan; Holy Family parish, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; St. Teresa parish, La Crescenta, St. John XIII parish, Fontana, Our Lady of Grace parish, Castro Valley and West Covina, California; St. Richard parish, Columbia Falls, Montana; Divine Redeemer parish, Colorado Springs, Colorado; Our Lady of the Valley chapel, Harvest, Alabama; at the National Shrine of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Libertyville, and Our Lady of the Woods parish, Orland Park, Illinois; St. Boniface parish, Lafayette, Indiana, and Notre Dame University. In addition, many individuals made their total consecration privately on that beautiful day or on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

**Welcome into
Our Lady’s MI Family!**





The Happiness We Crave...

In 1940, St. Maximilian drafted several writings in which he poured out his insights. Enjoy this brilliant one (KW 1296).

Man longs to be great, wise, rich, famous, happy (to love and to be loved). However, no happiness in this world fulfills him entirely. He wants more, ever more. When will he finally feel satisfied? Even if he could achieve the greatest happiness, as soon as he detects its limits, he would be overcome by longing and say: "Oh, if only there were a way to remove those limits!..."

What, then, is the happiness he craves? A happiness without limits, with no limits in intensity, magnitude, duration, or anything else. Such happiness is only God, the infinite source of all happiness, which shines forth to various degrees among the creatures. So, the soul wants to seize God Himself. But how to seize Him? How to unite oneself with such happiness? In the most perfect way possible. And again, without limits. To become one with Him, to the extent of becoming God Himself.

The wonderful law of an action and an equal and opposite reaction, inscribed by the Creator in all the work of creation as a seal of the life of the Most Holy Trinity, also operates here. The creature, out of the hand of the Almighty, returns to Him and finds rest in Him, to the point of becoming Him. But, since it is a limited creature, its becoming more perfect and its becoming like God may only be achieved by degrees—and though these are different, they are limited too. So in order to reach that goal an infinite time is needed, that is, eternity. In other words, the creature will always be limited, while the distance to be covered will be unlimited. That is why heaven is eternal.

But, my God, my only happiness (a man may protest), how can I know You in the most perfect way? I see and admire all Your creatures, I thank You and love You, but they are

not enough for me, as You well know Yourself. Besides, I cannot see You; I cannot hear You. According to Your will, I long to become like You, but in what way? You are pure spirit, while I am flesh. Tell me what to do and how to do it: show me my purpose. Tell me what I—a man made of flesh—should do to perfect myself, to make myself like You, pure Spirit, to divinize myself?

And God descended on earth, became man: the Man-God, Jesus Christ, offered the example of His own life, and taught with the Word. The souls who loved God came forward in great numbers to emulate that basic model, to make themselves like Him, to unite themselves to Him, to change themselves into Him. To attract the souls and turn them into Himself through love, Christ showed His own boundless love, His own heart inflamed with love for the souls, a love that drove Him to ascend the Cross, to stay with us in the Eucharist, to enter our souls, and to bequeath to us His own Mother as our Mother. The more a soul imitates Him, the more it makes itself like Him; and the more it makes itself like Him, the holier it becomes: it divinizes itself.

At the time of the fulfillment of the coming of Christ, the One and Triune God created the Immaculate Virgin, filled her with grace for Himself exclusively, and made His dwelling in her ("the Lord is with Thee" [Lk 1:28]). And by her humility, that Holy Virgin so impressed God and His heart that He gave to her His own only-begotten Son for a son. God the Son descended into her virginal womb, and God the Holy Spirit shaped in it the most holy body of the Man-God. And the Word was made flesh (Jn 1:14) as the result of the love of God and the Immaculata.

He became the firstborn, the Man-God, and souls are not reborn in Christ by any other way, other than through the love of God toward the Immaculata and in the Immaculata. And no word becomes flesh, no perfection or virtue is embodied or realized in anyone, except through the love that God has toward the Immaculata. Just as Christ, the source of grace became hers, so the distribution of graces also belongs to her. Every grace is the fruit of the life of the Most Blessed Trinity. The Father begets the Son from all eternity, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from both. By this same path, any perfection is disseminated throughout the world across all ranks. Every grace comes from the Father, who eternally begets the Son, and out of respect for the Son. The Holy Spirit, who from all eternity proceeds from the Father and the Son, gives shape to souls through this grace, in the Immaculata and through the Immaculata, in the likeness of the firstborn, the God-Man.

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.



Our Lady and the MI in My Life *Testimonials*

On April 10, 2017, I embarked on a journey to consecrate my life to Jesus through Our Lady. I studied the life and ministry of Maximilian Kolbe, especially how Our Lady played such an integral role in his priesthood. I studied how he began the Militia of the Immaculata even before he became a priest, only three days after the miracle of the sun in Fatima on October 13, 1917.

My plan was to totally entrust my life, my marriage, my home, my business and my five sons to the care of the Immaculata, on the 100th anniversary of the miracle at Fatima, May 13, 2017. Now, I had been close to Jesus since Our Lady really started to guide me to Him when I was in college in 1989. But in 2017 I just wanted to totally entrust everything, especially my eldest son Christopher, to her motherly care. My son was 23 at the time and I had gone through so much pain and suffering right along with him, with regard to his mental illnesses and addictions to drugs and alcohol.

I have raised all my sons in the Catholic faith. They have witnessed me work in ministry all their lives. Nevertheless, Chris started drifting from the faith in adolescence, just about the time he was being medicated for bi-polar, anxiety and ADHD.

I believe he had been tormented spiritually since he was born. He became addicted to his medications and then to street drugs, and almost never attended Mass, and certainly never visited the confessional.

I prayed earnestly for Chris for years. He got into trouble with the law for possession and DUI. That landed him in a few drug and alcohol inpatient rehab facilities and into Narcotics Anonymous, but as far as I knew, he would only call out to his “Higher Power” on the way to court hearings. He did spend a long weekend in Cook County jail, which scared both of us beyond belief. Almost every day he would struggle with addictions. Some days he would succeed, but many he succumbed to the temptations. It was so bad that I remember praying to Jesus to either take Chris from this world, or to heal him so he could function normally.

It was no coincidence that when I approached Our Lady for full entrustment in April 2017, Chris’ heart began to open. I remember praying to St. Kolbe because he is a patron saint for those suffering with drug addiction. My son’s entire demeanor began to change and he became kinder and gentler. He asked me if I had a cross I could give him so he could

wear it around his neck. He took his responsibilities seriously for the first time in his life. He told us that he would attend his Narcotics Anonymous meetings regularly because, finally it was what he really wanted for himself. From April, when I began preparations to Jesus through Our Lady, and beyond the day of consecration, May 13, 2017, Chris continued to make progress, noticeable to all family and friends around him. I was absolutely devastated when I found out on September 28, 2017, that my eldest son, Christopher Michael had passed from this life to the next.

That was the worst day of my 50 years of life. I cried out to Mother Mary, “Are you with me or not?” I felt her say to me, “Am I not your Mother? Am I not His Mother?”

September 28, 2019, (the day I write this) is the second anniversary of Chris’ passing. I am in no way close to being past my daily sufferings, but I am certain that the only reason I have made it so far is because of Mary’s maternal love. I still trust that Our Mother’s hand was, and is still involved in all this.

All my deepest prayers for Chris’ salvation are in her hands. I know in my heart that our Mother Mary was present when Chris took his last breath, and met Jesus his Judge. I know she pleaded with her Son on my son’s behalf. After all, I gave my son to her.

Joseph

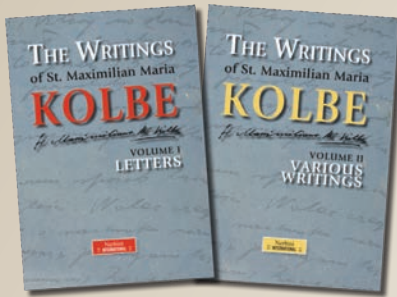
As a convert to Catholicism, I had not understood Mary’s role in my life as a Catholic. Through the daily emails I receive from the MI, I have come to know and love our Mother. I pray I will continue to grow and understand how she helps us on our journey and how to truly honor her in a way that pleases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

Jeannie

The Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe

VOLUME I: LETTERS • VOLUME II: VARIOUS WRITINGS
The Definitive English Edition!

Saint Maximilian Kolbe died at Auschwitz Concentration Camp as a "Martyr of Charity" in 1941. The Polish-born Franciscan Friar had spent the previous twenty-three years as a priest, evangelizer, media mogul, social commentator, missionary, and religious reformer. His life's work cut short at age 47, St. Kolbe nonetheless left behind an impressive body of writings. In the 1950s the English-speaking world first began reading bits and pieces of those writings translated from the original Polish, Italian, and Latin. Now, at long last, devotees and scholars alike can find the entire wide-ranging array those writings collected together in a two-volume compendium published by Nerbini International.



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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Available from the MI National Center



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