

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

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Christ is risen, Alleluia

## Going Deeper into the Heart

By John W. Galten, MI National President

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria!

Last month we considered the cry of the poor, the weak and the defenseless raised up in that part of society best described by the Church as “The Culture of Death.” We spoke of our obligation in justice, but especially in charity, to act to protect them and secure a future for them in law and practice.

This month, the month of Easter, the Heart of the Paschal Mystery, the mystery of the Father’s love for us in Christ, this Jesus who sacrificed Himself for us to save us and to secure for us the garland of victory—everlasting life, I want to return to thoughts on the Jesus as the Sacred Heart.

We live in a world of great distraction, of maddening noise, of a ceaseless scurrying about seeking happiness and meaning in things which cannot make us happy at the level of the heart—of my innermost self and the true path to the Truth, the Life and the Way. In short, this noise and distraction have seeped into our inner selves and created pandemonium. The consumerist society screams and blares its message everywhere and with ever-increasing volume: “This thing or this experience will answer all your dreams for the fulfillment of happiness.”

Sadly, we walk away from such things and experiences deflated, discouraged, betrayed by lies, and more empty and unsatisfied than ever. The world, to deceive itself, invents new definitions of human “freedom,” which justify our departure from that true moral conduct which orients us to the true, the good, and the beautiful, in reality our orientation to God. Instead there is the lure to follow the lie in Eden—you shall be as gods deciding for yourselves what

(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

(cont. from pg. 1)

is good and evil. The most recent census reveals a striking fact: that many are abandoning religions to become “spiritual,” nonmember of any religion true or not. They have been called the “nones,” referring to the answer to a census question about religious affiliation—they check the box “none.” This must be seen for what it represents: “no,” “nothing.” It is to enter a frightening realm of nihilism, of nothingness. It is a denial of God and a retreat into the radical prison of self, which claims to be the answer to happiness—a denial that I am fulfilled only by the other in love, God and my neighbor.

How are we to live and preach a way out of this prison of self-willed solitary confinement and the strait-jacket of illusion that I can find happiness by my all too limited definition?

Oddly, the answer to this dilemma is a *new interiority* proposed by Christ and His Church, but it has a price for us. It requires to go into ourselves and ask very difficult and uncomfortable questions of ourselves: Why am I unhappy, unfulfilled, lost, discouraged, followed by other questions. Why must I die? Is there salvation from my sins? Why is there evil? These questions must be asked as if they are important, foundational and key to my future sense of who I am, where I am and where I am going.

This going into our “heart,” the center of our self, leads us to a true recognition of who we are—in deep need, impoverished and lonely. In that interior prayerful honesty about self and life, we hear a gentle “knocking” or “the gentle breeze of the Holy Spirit.” This “breeze” dispels the smoke of confusing noise. In words deeper than any words we hear, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will

come in to him and eat with him.” It is the invitation to intimacy with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit.

This true “interiority,” discovered in real prayer and in active, prayerful participation in the Sacraments, opens the door of our deepest heart to the deepest Heart of Christ and all the endless boundaries of His love. His is a love that, because of His union with the Father bonded by the Holy Spirit, brings, in its wake, in Their embrace, the experience of the Prodigal Son—the age-old story of the recognition of our misery and the journey to the Father and reunion with His merciful love; that is, it leads to find God the Holy Trinity.

Lent, then, is an appropriate time to recognize the exterior noise and distraction that have filled our inner hearts with smoke and confusion. It is a time of crying out in our need to the Holy Spirit to clear this “smoke” that we might in truth and honest prayer come to the Sacred Heart and enter undistractedly into true intimacy with Him. This intimacy is promised by Our Lord in the Gospel of John:

“Whoever holds  
to my commandments  
and keeps them,  
is the one who loves me,  
and whoever loves me  
will be loved by my Father,  
and I shall love him  
and reveal myself to him.”

So, we must begin in humble prayer begging the Holy Spirit to make us quiet, tranquil, that the Sacred Heart might reveal Himself (His Love) to us.

To be continued next month! In the meantime: “Arise, let us be on our way.”

John W. Galten  
MI National President

P.S. Don’t forget to promote our MI Newsletter!

## NEW MI RESOURCES



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

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

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

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

Order copies today from the  
MI National Office:  
MINational@MissionImmaculata.com

Or call:  
331-223-5564





# Our Lady of Rocio MI Village

*Ron and Inmaculada Rodrigues, from Alabama, share their journey of faith and love to Our Lady.*

Our story begins many years ago, after a fall from grace and a quest to find the real meaning of Jesus and the truth behind the Catholic Church. Myself a convert to Catholicism, at the age of 21, even though I should have been baptized Catholic as a child—another long story as my father was Catholic and my mother a Nazarene. My father was in the Navy and gone most of the time. My entrance into the Catholic Church never happened. Due to many factors, out of my control, I was never baptized and my introduction to Jesus was through the Protestant faith. I went to a Lutheran school for a few years and many different Protestant churches. I never became a member of any church nor was I ever baptized. I guess it wasn't meant to be. At the age of 21, while in Spain, I became Catholic. I was baptized, received First Communion and Confirmation all at the same time. The problem was I knew very little about the Catholic faith. My lovely wife was a cradle Catholic and had some knowledge of the faith but, years ago, the Church didn't do a good job of teaching, even though she went to a Catholic school as a child.

So here we go, after being married, to live our life and hopefully as good Catholics. Well needless to say we failed miserably. We didn't have any solid foundation to build on. Yes, as fate would have it in this secular world we left the Church. Now the best part—we came back even though many years later.

But first, I had to convince myself that Jesus was real, that it wasn't a made-up story and something put out by the Church to influence the people. Yes, religion has been around since the beginning of time, but I thought to myself that any new nation knows it is good to have religion to help control the people, give them hope and keep them calm. So, my quest began to convince myself of the truth of Jesus and the whole story of salvation. Over a two-year

period, I read everything I could, both from Catholic and Protestant sources. I listened to CDs and watched DVDs, anything I could get my hands on to understand this devotion to Jesus and ultimately to Mary.

I guess we can say that Jesus not only opened my eyes but my heart was on fire for more knowledge. I became a full believer and extremely sorry for having wasted so many years lost. In this quest for truth, I learned about our Blessed Mother. I wanted to know more about Mary and Joseph and spent years reading, learning and studying. The more I



learned the closer I came to her. My love for Mary grew over time. The more I learned about her the more my heart desired to become closer to her. The Immaculate Conception echoed in my ears. I knew Mary had a greater role than most people knew.

During all this time on my quest for knowledge, my beautiful bride was along for the ride, probably ahead of me knowing all the time why we loved Mary and that Jesus was our true Savior. She could not explain it in a way I would listen or I was just too stubborn to listen.

I should have known, since she is named after the Immaculate Conception, her name being Maria Inmaculada, raised in Spain as a good Catholic.

Our journey to Mary finally came to fruition when one day our priest asked if we would consecrate ourselves to Mary with him and his wife. I guess I need to explain that comment. Our priest was a married priest, a convert from the Anglican faith; he and his whole family became Catholic after St. John Paul II allowed priests from other denominations to convert to the Catholic faith. I had my reservations, but I couldn't ask for a better person and man of faith. One of the hardest things he had to overcome to be a Catholic was the Catholic devotion to Mary. After learning more about our Blessed Mother and our reasons for our devotion he became very devoted to her.

On November 5, 2014, we started the journey to consecration to Mary, to end on December 8, the day of the Immaculate Conception. How fitting was this as my wife is named after the Immaculate Conception and that is what brought me to Mary!

Why the Militia of the Immaculata (MI)? That's a hard question but at the same time an easy answer. I love Mary, and one day I stumbled across a site about the Militia of the Immaculata founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe. Something inside me said, "You need to be part of this! This is focused on your love and devotion to Mary. You and your wife are devoted to the love of Mary and this is where your heart is: Coming closer to Jesus our Savior through Mary. Jesus gave us Mary on the Cross and she is the perfect disciple. The Mother of Jesus! What better way to know Jesus than through His Mother?" So, we signed up. I have never regretted it and I think it is one of the best things I have ever done.

Now let us fast forward a few years: My wife decides we should start an MI Village. Not that I am against it by any means, but I know I will bear the brunt of most of the administrative and evangelical work to run this Village. So of course, I am very reluctant. But she has a way of making me see the way Jesus and Mary want. She would call it my voice of reason since I don't listen. So off we go into the blind trying to start an MI Village we really don't know much about. The only thing on our side is our love and devotion to Mary and our love for Jesus and our desires to do everything we can to bring others to this same state of mind we have. So here we go, two people in love with Jesus and Mary, with a sincere desire to bring others to Jesus through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, trying to start a Village. I told Inmaculada that maybe we are lost in our own imaginations or in over our heads!

(Continues on pg. 7)



## Marian Consecration Rediscovered

by Fr. Brad A. Milunski, OFM Conv.

“If you love me, where are the flowers?” One of my esteemed theology professors once spoke these words to stress the fundamentally incarnational character of our Catholic faith. Our belief in the salvation won for us by Jesus Christ cannot consist solely of wonderful ideas or words that go unexpressed in concrete deeds or devotion. A marriage without flowers—or an occasional dinner out or nice things spouses do for each other—would be lifeless. Similarly, a Catholic life without devotion lacks spice, vigor and joy.

Growing up in a religiously-observant Catholic household, I was blessed with wonderful parents: Sunday Mass, parish committees, and all sorts of activities. My father even took a turn as president of the parish council; my mother faithfully shepherded the activities of the Altar-Rosary society. That being said, we were not a particularly devotional family: no family Rosary or prayers around the fireplace. My parents did, however, encourage my personal prayer life and budding vocation. Baptized Brad Anthony, I began reading the lives of the saints early on and learned about my patron and first Franciscan I ever knew, St. Anthony of Padua. Contact with the local friars and vocation retreats led me to enter Franciscan formation after high school graduation in the early 80s.

My years in Franciscan initial formation and our college-seminary fostered a

solid liturgical life and immersion in the riches of the Franciscan intellectual and spiritual tradition. The wealth of talented friars, as well as top-notch lay men and women in their fields, gave me a solid Franciscan theological and philosophical foundation on which to build.

That more traditional trajectory was altered a great deal during my theological studies in preparation for ordination as a friar-priest. Lest what I write be interpreted as disparaging my theological education (in an institution not belonging to the friars), I want to affirm from the outset that my graduate studies in theology fired my enthusiasm and excitement about theology and the liturgy that persist even to this day. Some of my mentors, however, in their desire to root our theological training in thoroughly contemporary foundations, perhaps unintentionally discouraged more traditional devotions as reminiscent of an era long-past its prime or at least best left moribund.

Such was my experience during my course on Mariology, taught by a recognized expert in the field. When I asked her what she thought of the writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe, she crinkled her nose a bit and affirmed that it wasn’t easy (or even desirable) to bring his type of devotion and theology into the late twentieth-century, post-Vatican II Church. In that time period I was also of her ilk and looked askance at devotional expressions that appeared “too traditional.”

Well.... People, times, and things change with the grace of God. Many of my ministerial assignments involved working with parishioners or other faithful who seemed quite well-fed by devotions and traditions I had neglected from the days when I used to kneel at my bed as a child or young teen at home and faithfully “say my prayers.” As I look back I can see the Lord’s providential hand leading me back to where I began. Guess what? Devotion began to creep back into my life in my early years as a friar-priest, particularly through my “discovery” of Divine Mercy and a Spirit-inspired willingness to delve back into the devotion of my younger years and the riches of our Kolbean heri-

tage, nourished now by a rich theological tradition that continually reminds me of how Catholicism is rarely about either/or but instead both/and when it comes to the spiritual life, liturgy and devotion.

Most of my years of ministry as a friar-priest have been devoted to the initial formation of young men who come to embrace Conventual Franciscan life. I have watched the backgrounds of candidates to our life change over the years. The majority of those today who are interested in consecrated life as a Franciscan already enter initial formation with a spiritual life nourished by the Mass, personal prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and even Marian consecration. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge my debt to them for their example and fervent desire that have also inspired and spurred me on to reconnect with our deep Marian-Franciscan roots.

After having made my consecration to the Mother of God many years ago, I have rediscovered the endless riches of that decision and renew it daily. Now I can’t get enough of resources that immerse me deeper and deeper into Marian theology and devotion. Far from leading me away or distracting me from Jesus Christ, Marian consecration has helped me to stand firmer in my consecration as a Franciscan friar and priest.

May the Mother of God continue to intercede for us to make us instruments of God’s kingdom of peace, justice and holiness.

*Fr. Brad Milunski, OFM Conv., is a member of the Our Lady of the Angels Province of the Conventual Franciscan Friars. He professed vows in 1986 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1993. Fr. Brad has served in parish and formation ministry for the friars in the USA as well as in provincial administration. He is currently director of the Conventual Franciscan postulancy program in Chicago, Illinois.*





# Reflection on April MI Intention

O Immaculata please intercede that the Church through all her members may be a living witness of the Risen Lord.

*"The song of the dove is heard in our land." (Song of Songs 2:12)*

The Militia of the Immaculata is present all over the world. As members of a kingdom where the sun never sets, MI members contribute to the building up of the Kingdom of God through their total offering to the Immaculata. In the natural order, while in North America or Europe it is spring, in the Philippines, for instance, it is fall. However, in the heart of all Knights of the Immaculata will be spring, as we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord, the full manifestation of His victorious Life and Love.

On Easter Sunday 1938, St. Maximilian wrote: "It is springtime. The first buds sprout, and near the statue of the Immaculata the peach is all in bloom. In this atmosphere, we listen to the joyful hymns of the solemnity of Easter, which, in the words of St. Paul, marks the foundation of our faith in Jesus [cf. 1 Cor 15:14-25]. The Lord is risen: hundreds of mouths repeat today. 'We too must rise again,' announces an Easter hymn, but not only after death, because every year the holy Church invites the faithful to rise again, urging them to come to Easter Confession. ... Even if one had the misfortune to die spiritually, even though Satan had told him he would never rise from the dead, never again, all one needs is sincerely to appeal to the Mediatrix of all graces, to the Immaculata, not only to obtain the grace of resurrection, but also to reach the high steps, very high indeed, of holiness. The closer one approaches her,

the more abundantly one draws from the graces of knowledge and of love, of a generous love toward God, Who for our sake mounted the Cross" (KW 1230).

In the Song of Songs, in a poetical manner the change of seasons is described as follows: "For see, the winter is past; the rains are over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land. ... Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come!" (Song 2:11-13).

Let us ask ourselves: Whom can we approach and draw closer to the Immaculata so that they may experience the springtime of spiritual resurrection? Many people are suffering in body and spirit, many are waiting for our love as missionary disciples of the risen Lord. Will we be able to recognize the face of Christ in them as Our Lady would have us do? She reminds us constantly of her Son's words: "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me" (Mt 25:40).

St. Maximilian Kolbe manifested his faith in the Resurrection even in hellish concentration camp of Auschwitz. Like Christ, he emptied himself and gave his life for another man and for everyone who was close to him. Even in the starvation cell he sang hymns and proclaimed the Resurrection of Jesus by his sacrificial love, thus bringing hope in eternal life to his fellow prisoners. May we become witnesses of the Risen Lord through our Gospel-like lives!

(From the MI International Office)

## MI News from around the Country



**SPECIAL THANKS  
TO TONY AND SUE MAY**  
*from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for the gift of  
this beautiful color pencil drawing to  
the MI National Center!*



*As new MI Villages are being developed and established in various States, we would like encourage existing MI Villages to share their stories and testimonies as well as MI members to prayerfully consider starting an MI Village in their areas!*

### **New MI Villages** **Our Lady of Protection MI Village**

**Where:** Sts. Peter and Paul Parish,  
Scott, Louisiana.

**When:** First Saturday of the Month.

**Contact Jeanne Bergeron**  
at 337-349-0953

### **Our Lady of Rocio MI Village**

**Where:** Our Lady of the Valley, Catholic Military  
Community, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama

**When:** Once a Month; call for details about date  
and time.

**Contact Ron & Inmaculada Rodrigues**  
at 256-656-1058



# The Religion Of Love

While a missionary in Japan, Fr. Maximilian Kolbe wrote this Easter article for the readers of the Japanese magazine.

Hatred divides, separates and destroys, while, to the contrary, love unites, brings about peace, and is constructive. It is not strange then that only love manages always to render men perfect and, therefore, that only the religion that teaches love of God and neighbor can perfect men.

The religion of Jesus Christ is really this religion of love, of perfect love, and this is evident in the holy words of Jesus Christ.

St. Matthew, one of the Twelve who lived in the company of Jesus, narrates the following in his Gospel (22:35–40): “And one of them, a scholar of the law, tested him by asking, ‘Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. The whole law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.’”

One of the Apostles, St. John, an eyewitness of the passion and death of Jesus on the Cross, left us a description of the beautiful instructions that He gave to the Apostles during the last supper. St. John did not simply participate in that last supper, but, being the beloved disciple, he stood beside Jesus, and could best understand the meaning of Christ’s words. Let us see some passages from the Gospel written by John himself: “My children, I will be with you only a little while longer... I give you a new commandment: love one another” (Jn 13:33–34). “As the Father loves Me, so I also love you. Remain in My love. If you keep My

commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. ... It was not you who chose Me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. This I command you: love one another” (Jn 15:9–17).

Toward the end of the supper Jesus addressed a prayer to His heavenly Father at the end of which He said the following words: “As you sent Me into the world, so I sent them into the world. And I consecrate Myself for them, so they also may be consecrated in truth. I pray not only for them, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word, so they may all be one, as you, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. I have given them the glory You gave Me, so that they may be one, as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may be brought to perfection as one, that the world may know that You sent Me, and that you loved them even as You loved Me. Father, they are Your gift to Me. I wish that where I am they also may be with Me, that they may see My glory, which You gave Me, because you loved Me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world also does not know You, but I know You, and they know that You sent Me. I made known to them Your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them and I in them” (Jn 17:18–26). It is evident, from these words, that Jesus deeply desired that a sincere love reign among men.

The Apostles understood Jesus’ desire well. This is why St. Peter writes in one of his letters: “Above all, let your love for one another be intense, for love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pt 4:8). In his first letter, St. John writes, “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him” (1 Jn 4:16). “And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23). “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God” (1 Jn 4:7).

It can be said that if this religion is spread around the whole world, the world would become a paradise.

(KW 1205)

## Official Act of Total Consecration to the Immaculata

(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.





## A Lenten Journey with Mary

Approximately 30 people gathered the first weekend of Lent, March 8-9, 2019, to begin the journey through this holy season with a retreat dedicated to its namesake. With retreat master Fr. Alan Benander, O. Praem., a member of the Norbertine Fathers of St. Michael's Abbey in the Diocese of Orange, California, attendees began their two days of reflection by participating in the parish's Lenten prayer services. It consisted of Eucharistic Adoration, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Stations of the Cross, and a Lenten meal during which a movie on the life of St. Paul was shown. Before departing for the evening, Deacon Tom Rodgers led Night Prayer from "The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

The second day began with an 8:00am Mass celebrated by Father Alan, breakfast,

the Liturgy of the Hours (Morning Prayer) led by Deacon Jack Clark and a welcoming address by pastor Father Gustavo Vidal. Father Alan continued the morning with two talks: the first on the "Hail Mary" and the second on the "Hail Holy Queen," during which he interspersed his knowledge of apologetics and his experiences within the pro-life movement.

Parish guitarist Buzz Nietert enhanced the periods of silence after each talk with gentle musical eludes. Deacon Jack Clark led the praying of the Angelus at noon before lunch.

The afternoon segment of the second day began with a Holy Hour during which retreat participants led the Chaplet of the Seven Sorrows of Mary. Deacon Howard Schuyler followed with a presentation

on the Marian dogmas, highlighting the words of Pope St. John Paul II. At 3:00pm, Deacon Jack Clark led all in the chanting of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. Father Alan gave the final talk for the retreat on the "Act of Total Consecration prayer" by St. Maximilian Kolbe and offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the afternoon. At the conclusion of the parish's 5:00 pm Saturday evening Mass, Father Alan assisted approximately ten individuals in the making or renewing of their Total Consecrations to the Immaculata in the spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe, before concluding the retreat at 6:30 pm.

Participant evaluations noted that many greatly benefited from both the talks and the multiple elements that encompassed their retreat experience. It is with hope that those seeking a meditative retreat experience will do so at the next, tentatively scheduled February 28-29, 2020, Militia of the Immaculata (MI) Lenten Retreat at St. Mary Catholic Church, West Haven, Utah.

Donna Masek

## Our Lady of Rocio MI Village

(Cont. from pg.3)

Yet, we continued with our pursuit of starting an MI Village, basically in the blind, only knowing if we could find others or convince others to love Mary as we do, we will be successful. Now the fun begins. The call for help went out to the MI National Office: What do we do? How do we start? We need materials. The MI headquarters, especially Antonella and the staff at the MI in Illinois, was more than helpful and provided all we needed. It took us a couple of months to finally get everything together, from getting the priest approval, to getting time and space to have meetings, putting out announcements and finally setting a date for our first meeting.

As for myself, I had to prepare a briefing on what is MI, why MI, what is the goal and mission of MI, what are the responsibilities of an MI member, who can be a member, and then explain why we love Mary so much and our devotion to Mary,

I think that was the easier part. The MI did provide sufficient materials to help me answer most of those questions.

Now with all the preparation we were seeing little results, and our hearts prayed and asked Mary for help as the first couple of months didn't bear

any fruit. No one was signing up and we were falling into despair. Does no one want to devote themselves to Mary?

After a couple of months of anticipation, we finally began our MI Village in January 2019. We have had our third meeting and our first consecration day for those ready to consecrate their hearts to Mary was scheduled to be March 25, 2019. We are very excited to see so many people with a desire to devote themselves to Jesus through our Blessed Mother. We have 18 members now and 12 new members as of the day of the Annunciation to our Blessed Mother. We put it all in the hands of Mary and she brought her children to her Heart. I think we were trying too hard to do it our way instead of letting Mary do the work for us. After all, it is her Village.

We have elected to name our MI Village the Lady of Rocio after our family in Spain's devotion to our Blessed Mother. Spain is a very Marian country and the devotion for Mary is something to be desired by all. The processions and events for our Blessed Mother are spectacular and bring tears to your eyes. The devotion the people have for the Blessed Mother is something we wished all the world had. The festival of Rocio, celebrated on the

day of Pentecost, brings close to a million people each year. Tradition has it, that a small statue of the Virgin was found by a woodsman in a tree trunk, and she asked that a church be built on this spot in her honor.

Our Lady of Rocio was canonically crowned in accordance with Papal Bull dated September 8, 1918. The ceremony took place in El Rocio on June 8, 1919. On June 14, 1993, Pope John Paul II visited and prayed in the Sanctuary of our Lady of Rocio along with a crowd of twenty-five thousand people. He implored Christians to stay true to the Faith and live by the example set by the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and he hoped that one day the entire world would become Rocieros. May we all come to know Mary as Rocieros!

Ronald & Inmaculada Rodrigues  
Our Lady of Rocio MI Village, Alabama





# MI RESOURCES

Available from the  
MI National Center

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



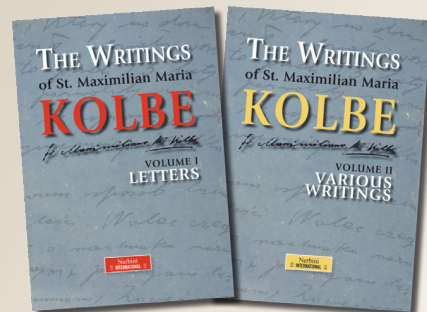
Miraculous medals and  
various MI brochures  
can be requested  
from the MI National Office

# The Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe

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