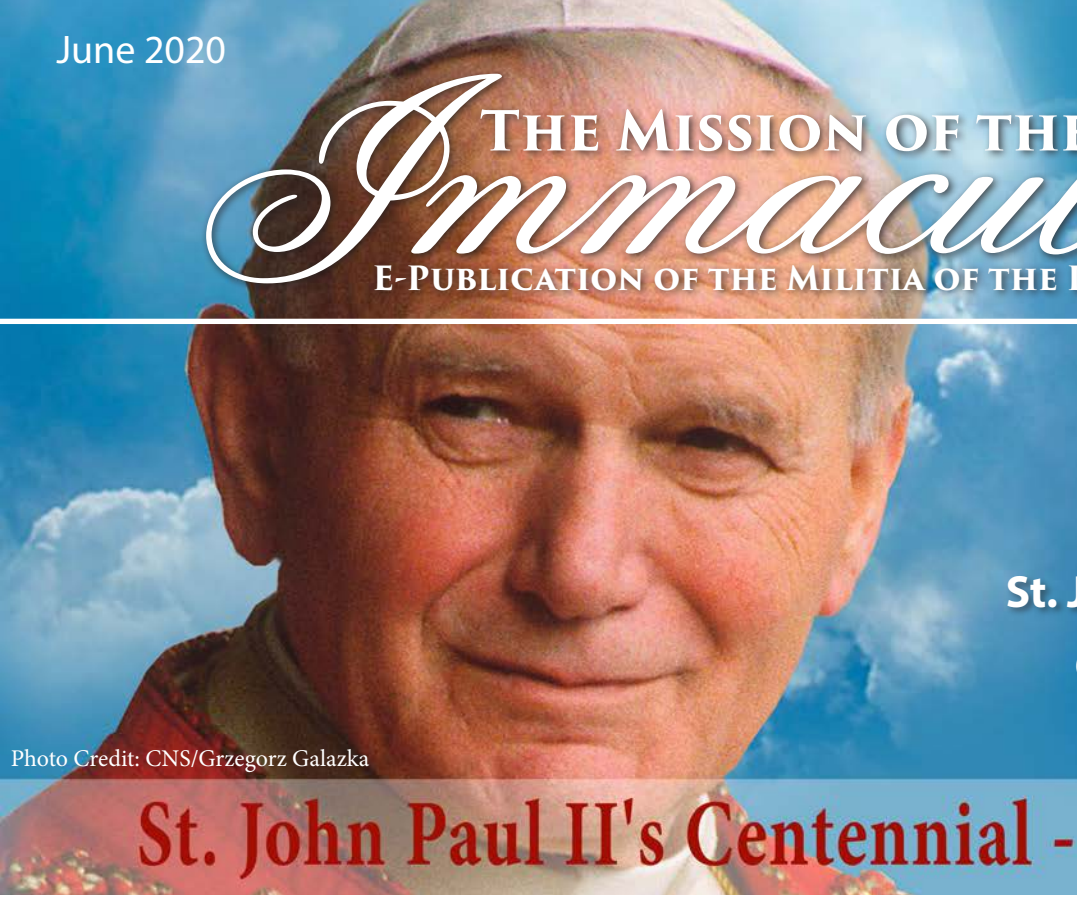


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St. John Paul II's Centennial - *Special Issue*

The Gift of the Risen Lord

By John W. Galten, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! Although the virus is still with us, I want to return to a presentation of the Holy Spirit from the Holy Scriptures. It is crucial to understand His role in our lives, and we know that His spouse, the Immaculata, collaborates with Him in their common work of applying the salvific merits of Jesus Christ. To understand Him is to understand her. Don't forget to keep up your prayers for an end to the plague, its victims, and a return to the public celebration of the Sacraments.

In the Gospel of St. John, we find a very deep and profound revelation of the Holy Spirit. Remember that St. John lived longer than the other Apostles and had a more extended period to contemplate the life, actions and words of Jesus. He was also the Apostle "whom Jesus loved," often resting his head on the breast of Jesus while at table. The early Fathers of the Church saw in this St. John contemplating the thoughts and movements of the Most Sacred Heart. It is not surprising that that image of the Last Supper has become the icon of contemplation. We can surmise that St. John possessed some particular knowledge of the Holy Spirit as he listened to that same Spirit speak in the depths of Jesus' Heart.

In his Gospel, chapters 13-17, St. John explores an extended reporting of Jesus' last discourse (talk) at the Last Supper. In these chapters, Jesus unburdens Himself of the plan of God, which is coming to a climax in the Paschal Mystery in the next few days. It may be said that He reveals the great secrets of interpretations of the Paschal Mystery but also of the future Church and the work of the Holy Spirit. It is, without doubt, one of the deepest parts of Holy Scripture.

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"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)

We must listen to it with concentration and awe.

Chapter 13 begins with Jesus washing the feet of the Disciples. This simple, humble act mirrors for us the mission we have to serve through love. It sets the tone for the rest of the Passover evening, His last supper with the Twelve, until we sup with Him in the Holy Eucharist.

Jesus continues to give them His new commandment to love one another as He has loved us. We will see that we cannot love with His love unless the promised Spirit is poured into our hearts, making us capable of this infinite Love.

Jesus goes on (in chapter 14) to reassure us that we should not be anxious or worried for He is going to the Father. He promises that He will return to show us the way, the way of the Church. Jesus speaks of His unity with the Father and that we will know the Father because we know Jesus who is His Image: He is the only begotten Son. Here is an intimation of the Trinity who will come to those who believe and love, who shall become new, loving temples, having the consolation, through faith, of knowing God by His very Presence in their hearts. How? Because, as we shall see, the Holy Spirit will bring this about in us, making us holy and fit to be temples of the Holy Trinity. Is that not a joyous thought and possibility? Does this not fill us with peace and confidence?!

Chapter 14 concludes on a soaring note, that Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to those who love and live in His promises. He promises the Spirit, not as a transient guest, but as the One who will be with us forever. This consoling Spirit will fill us and assure us that we are not orphaned and abandoned, but adopted sons and daughters of God.

If we continue to keep His commandments, especially that of charity/love, the Spirit will reveal (manifest) the Presence of the Father and the Son now living in our souls and animating us with that Divine Life which is infinite love. The Prophets of the Old Covenant are fully revealed: the Spirit is not only on us but in us, creating the “new heart” capable of this new life in the Trinity.

Does this knowledge, this Revelation, not remind us of the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary?

Do we not in humility hear a modification of St. Elizabeth’s words, “Who am I that the Spirit of God should visit me?” This should cause us to bow our heads in wonder, adoration, and gratitude.

Until next time, when we continue to listen to John 15, I end with the concluding words of chapter, “Rise, let us go from here.”

John W. Galten
MI National President

P.S. Enjoy this **Special Issue dedicated to St. John Paul II** on the centenary of his birth! 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—and invite family and friends to consider total consecration to Our Lady!



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.

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St. John Paul II 's Message to the MI

After the recitation of the Angelus on Sunday, October 18, 1981, St. John Paul II met participants in the National Congress of the Militia of the Immaculata. The Holy Father delivered the following address, a precious legacy for us today.

Beloved in Christ!

The reason that moved you to ask for this special audience is the commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the death of Blessed Maximilian Mary Kolbe and of the tenth anniversary of his beatification. You belong, in fact, to the “Militia of Mary Immaculate” founded by him, and you have wished to celebrate these two important and meaningful dates by meeting with the Pope. And, as you can imagine, I am truly happy to welcome you with all the affection and warmth of my heart, because of the beauty and greatness of the ideal that you are trying to live, following the example and teaching of Father Maximilian Kolbe, an illustrious son of my country, Poland, a fascinating example with his intelligence and his holiness.

I address my warm greeting, therefore, to the Minister General of the Friars Minor Conventual, to the superiors and religious, and to all of you, each one in particular, who represent the many nuclei of the “Militia” scattered all over the world. I greet you and I thank you for having come to Rome, where in October 1917, Father Maximilian, as you know, founded the Militia of Mary Immaculate. I thank you above all for wishing to commemorate here with me the dates of his death and his beatification, which arouse in me a wave of memories and emotion. How often, in fact, have I gone on pilgrimage to the place of torture and glory, to the “bunker of hunger,” in the Auschwitz camp, where he died on August 14, forty years ago, the victim of hatred, but at the same time the victor with his love! And how I remember my last visit, on June 7, 1979, during

the journey in Poland, when, entering the haunting room, I knelt at that “Golgotha of the modern world.” You also make me remember with intense nostalgia the solemn day of his beatification on October, 17, 1971, when I was round the altar with the Holy Father Paul VI and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, and the visit paid on February 26 of this year to the City of Mary Immaculate at Nagasaki, which he founded.

Beloved Father Kolbe

Remembering these dates, we seem to see among us the person of Father Maximilian, serious and stern, affable and smiling; and again we hear Paul VI’s eulogy of him in the memorable beatification homily: “Blessed means safe and glorious. It means a citizen of heaven, with all the peculiar signs of the citizen of the earth; it means a brother and friend, whom we know is still ours, in fact, more than ever ours...; it means an advocate protector in the kingdom of charity; finally, it means an exemplary model, a type of man to whom we can adapt our art of living...” (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, IX, 1971, p. 906). Paul VI himself mentioned Father Maximilian again in the Apostolic Letter *Gaudete in Domino* (May, 22, 1975) as “A luminous image for our generation... a genuine disciple of St. Francis.” Before such an elect example, which is also, however, so human and close to us, reflection becomes more personal and more responsible for you, who belong to the Militia of Mary Immaculate. The Statutes...affirm that the association “wishes to extend as much as possible the very gentle Kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus through Mary Immaculate, or rather to be in the service of Mary Immaculate in this mission that she has as Mother of the Church.” This was Father Maximilian’s ideal, to which he dedicated his life, intellectual talents,

physical strength and tireless activity. Membership in the Militia means complete dedication to the Kingdom of God and to the salvation of souls through Mary Immaculate.

Live Ideals Fervently

I exhort you therefore to live this ideal of yours with more and more fervent commitment. In our society, your consecration to Mary Immaculate must make you serene, confident and courageous witnesses. Like Father Maximilian you are passionately in love with truth. The Church today essentially needs unity in truth. In fact, it is truth that gives the courage for great decisions, heroic choices, definitive dedication. It is truth that gives the strength to live difficult virtues, the evangelical beatitudes, youthful purity, and consecrated and conjugal chastity! It is knowledge and love of truth which gives rise to priestly, religious and missionary vocations and which moves to charity, to the extent of self-sacrifice, as Father Maximilian did. And the truth is Christ known, followed and witnessed: “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12), the Divine Master said, and he added: “You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14). The two affirmations are equivalent, clearly laying down the line of conduct and responsibility of every Christian: “He who follows me will not walk in darkness” (John 8:12; 12:46). From truth there logically springs the aspiration to holiness, which was Father Maximilian’s supreme ideal. So he wrote: “It is no pride to desire to be the greatest saint and to sanctify the greatest number of souls, trusting only in God through the Immaculata” (*The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe*, KW 987 H). From truth springs the sense of complete trust and surrender to the Almighty, especially in the tribulations and turmoil that accompany human history.

Be Strong in the Faith

Be strong in faith and live with enthusiasm the commitments of the Militia of Mary Immaculate, to which you belong, following the teaching and examples of Father Maximilian Kolbe. “To suffer, work, love and rejoice”: this was his program and the summary of his life. May it be so also for you, with the help of the Blessed Virgin. And may my blessing, which I impart with great affection to you and to all the members of your Militia always accompany you.

*Note: The Militia of the Immaculata is known also as the Militia of Mary Immaculate in other countries.



"Everywhere Love"

Shortly after St. Maximilian's canonization, on December 8, 1982, Pope John Paul II gave this insightful homily at St. Mary Major Basilica, in Rome.

"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28). While these words of the angel's greeting softly re-echo in our mind, I wish to turn my glance, along with you, dear brothers and sisters, to the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with the spiritual eye of St. Maximilian Kolbe. He bound all the works of his life and his vocation to Mary Immaculate. He has much to tell us on the solemnity of Mary Immaculate, whose devout "knight" he loved to call himself.

His love for Mary Immaculate was indeed the center of his spiritual life, the fruitful inspiring principle of his apostolic activity. The sublime model of Mary immaculate illuminated and guided his entire existence along his ways in the world and made his heroic death in the extermination camp of Auschwitz a splendid Christian and priestly witness. With the intuition of a saint and the refinement of a theologian, Maximilian Kolbe meditated with extraordinary insight on the mystery of Mary's Immaculate Conception in the light of Sacred Scripture, the Magisterium, and the Liturgy of the Church, drawing from them wonderful lessons of life. He has appeared in our time as a prophet and an apos-

tle of a new "Marian era," destined to make Christ and His Gospel shine with a bright light in the entire world.

This mission that he carried out with ardor and dedication, "classified him," as Paul VI stated in the homily at his beatification, "among the great saints and clairvoyant minds that have understood, venerated and sung the mystery of Mary" (*Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, IX, 1971, p. 909). He was aware of the inexhaustible depths of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, for which "human words cannot describe who the one is, who became the true Mother of God" (KW 1292). However, his greatest regret was that Mary Immaculate was not sufficiently known and loved after the example of Jesus Christ and how the Tradition of the Church and the examples of the saints teach us. Indeed, in loving Mary, we honor God, who raised her to the dignity of the Mother of His Son made man, and we unite ourselves with Jesus Christ who loved her as a mother. We will never love her as He loved her: "Jesus was the first to honor her as His Mother.... we ought to imitate Him also in this.... We shall never be able to equal the love that Jesus Himself had for His Mother" (KW 751). Love

for Mary, Father Maximilian states, is the simplest and easiest way to sanctify ourselves, fulfilling our Christian vocation. The love of which he speaks is certainly not a superficial sentimentalism, but it is a generous commitment, it is a giving of the whole person, as he himself showed us with his life of evangelical fidelity right up to his heroic death.

St. Maximilian Kolbe's attention was incessantly concentrated on Mary's Immaculate Conception in order to be able to gather the marvelous wealth contained in the name that she herself revealed and that constitutes the explanation of what [the] Gospel teaches us in the words of the Angel Gabriel: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" (Lk 1:28). Recalling the apparitions at Lourdes—which for him were a stimulus and an incentive to understand better the fonts of Revelation—he observes, "To St. Bernadette, who had questioned her repeatedly in Lourdes, the Immaculate Virgin answered: 'I am the Immaculate Conception.' With these words she clearly stated that not only was she 'conceived without sin' but that she was 'Immaculate Conception' itself, just as a white object is more than its whiteness, or a perfect object is more than its perfection (KW 1224). The Immaculate Conception is the name that reveals with precision who Mary is: it not only affirms a quality, but it exactly defines her person. Mary is radically holy in the totality of her existence, from the very beginning.

The sublime, supernatural grandeur was granted to Mary with regard to Jesus Christ; it is in Him and through Him that God shared with her the fullness of sanctity. Mary is immaculate because she is the Mother of God, and she became the Mother of God because she is immaculate, Maximilian Kolbe states with clear-cut terms. Mary's Immaculate Conception

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"Everywhere Love"

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manifests in a unique and sublime way the absolute centrality and the universal salvific role of Jesus Christ. "From the Divine Maternity flow all the graces bestowed upon the Most Holy Virgin Mary and the first of these graces is the Immaculate Conception" (KW 1210). For this reason, Mary is not simply like Eve before original sin, but she was enriched with a fullness of incomparable grace because she is the Mother of Christ, and the Immaculate Conception was the beginning of a prodigious uninterrupted growth of her supernatural life.

The mystery of Mary's sanctity must be contemplated in the totality of the divine order of salvation in order to be grasped in a harmonious way, lest it appear that this privilege separates her from the Church, which is the Body of Christ. Father Maximilian takes great pains to tie Mary's Immaculate Conception and her role in the plan of salvation to the mystery of the Trinity, and in a completely special way to the person of the Holy Spirit. With profound cleverness he developed the multiple aspects contained in the notion of "Spouse of the Holy Spirit," well known in patristic and theological tradition and suggested by the New Testament, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; hence the holy Offspring to be born will be called Son of God" (Lk 1:35). It is an analogy, St. Maximilian Kolbe stresses, that

gives a glimpse of the ineffable, intimate and fruitful union between the Holy Spirit and Mary. "From the first moment of her existence the Giver of graces, the Holy Spirit, established His dwelling in her soul, took possession of it absolutely, and permeated her so completely that the name of Bride of the Holy Spirit conveys but a pale, distant, imperfect, albeit truthful shadow of such union (KW 1224).

Investigating with ecstatic admiration the divine plan of salvation, which has its source in the Father who willed to communicate freely to creatures the divine life of Jesus Christ, and which was manifested in Mary Immaculate in a marvelous way, Father Kolbe, fascinated and enraptured, exclaims, "Everywhere love" (KW 1291). The gratuitous love of God is the answer to all questions. "God is love," St. John affirms (1Jn 4:8). Everything that exists is a reflection of the free love of God, and therefore every creature expresses in some way its infinite splendor. In a particular way, love is the center and vertex of the human person, made in the image and likeness of God. Mary Immaculate, the highest and most perfect of human persons, eminently reproduces the image of God and is therefore made capable of loving Him with incomparable intensity as the Immaculata. She is the unique handmaid of the Lord (cf. Lk 1:38) who with her free and personal fiat responds to God's love by always doing what He asks of her. As the response of every other creature, hers is not an autonomous response, but it is a grace and a gift of God. In this response there is involved all of her freedom.

"In the union of the Holy Spirit with her, not only does love unite these two Beings, but the first one of them is all the love of the Most Holy Trinity, while the second is all the love

of creation. Thus, in this union heaven meets earth, all of heaven with all of the earth, all Uncreated Love with all created love; it is the highest expression of love" (KW 1318).

The circulating nature of love, which originates from the Father and which in Mary's response returns to its source, is a characteristic and fundamental aspect of Father Kolbe's Mariam thought. It is this principle that is at the base of his Christian anthropology, his view of the history and the spiritual life of every person. Mary immaculate is the archetype and fullness of every creature love; her crystal-clear and most intense love for God includes in its perfection that fragile and soiled love of other creatures. All this does not obscure nor diminish the absolute centrality of Jesus Christ in the order of salvation, but illuminates it and proclaims it vigorously because Mary derives all her grandeur from him. As the history of the Church teaches, Mary's role is to make her Son shine, to lead to Him, and to help welcome Him.

The continual theological investigation of the mystery of Mary Immaculatae became for Maximilian Kolbe the source and the motive for unlimited giving and extraordinary dynamism. He truly knew how to incorporate the truth into life, also because he attained a knowledge of Mary, as all the saints, not only from reflection guided by faith, but especially from prayer.

And now, receiving the final exhortation of the heroic son of Poland and the authentic messenger of Marian devotion, [let us] repeat to her, with that ardor and filial piety that so distinguished Saint Maximilian, the words of the angel, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Amen.

MI

YOUTH &
YOUNG ADULTS




St. John Paul II to Youth

When visiting the United States in 1993 for the eighth celebration of World Youth Day in Denver, Colorado, St. John Paul II addressed the youth with boldness.

He said, “This marvelous world ... is the theater of a never ending battle being waged for our dignity and identity as free, spiritual beings. This struggle parallels the apocalyptic combat described in the [book of Revelation]. Death battles against Life: a ‘culture of death’ seeks to impose itself on our desire to live, and live to the full.”

St. John Paul II spelled out how this battle is being waged in our world, “The family especially is under attack. And the sacred character of human life denied. Naturally, the weakest members of society are the most at risk: the unborn, children, the sick, the handicapped, the old, the poor and unemployed, the immigrant and refugee, the South of the world!”

He called young people to be on the front line of this spiritual warfare, pointing to specific tasks that will lead to the triumph of good over evil.

Go and share with everyone the freedom you have found in Christ

Jesus went in search of the men and women of his time. He engaged them in an open and truthful dialogue, whatever their condition. As the Good Samaritan of the human family, He came close to people to heal them of their sins and of the wounds, which life inflicts, and to bring them back to the Father’s house. Young people of World Youth Day, the Church asks you to go, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to those who are near and those who are far away. Share with them the freedom you have found in Christ. People thirst for genuine inner freedom. They yearn for the Life which Christ came to give in abundance.

Do not be afraid!

Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places, like the first Apostles who preached Christ and the Good News of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel (cf. Rom 1:16). It is the time to preach it from the rooftops (cf. Mt 10:27) ... The Gospel must not be kept hidden because of fear or indifference. It was never meant to be hidden away in private. It has to be put on a stand so that people may see its light and give praise to our heavenly Father.

The proclamation of the Gospel has been put into your hands

At this stage of history, the liberating message of the Gospel of Life has been put into your hands. And the mission of proclaiming it to the ends of the earth is now passing to your generation. Like the great Apostle Paul, you too must feel the full urgency of the task: “Woe to me if I do not evangelize” (1 Cor 9:16). Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life. The Church needs your energies, your enthusiasm, your youthful ideals, in order to make the Gospel of Life penetrate the fabric of society, transforming people’s hearts and the structures of society in order to create a civilization of true justice and love. Now more than ever, in a world that is often without light and without the courage of noble ideals, people need the fresh, vital spirituality of the Gospel.

Be light to the world and show it the path to authentic life

Young pilgrims, Christ needs you to enlighten the world and to show it the “path to life” (Ps 16:11).

The challenge is to make the Church’s “yes” to Life concrete and effective. The struggle will be long, and it needs each one of you. Place your intelligence, your talents, your enthusiasm, your compassion and your fortitude at the service of life!





Consecration: Two Hearts United and Pierced

St. John Paul II's homily at Fatima , May 13, 1982

“And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19:27). The disciple’s name was John. It was he, John, the son of Zebedee, the apostle and evangelist, who heard from the Cross the words of Christ: “Behold, your mother.” But first Christ had said to His Mother: “Woman, behold, your son.” This was a wonderful testament. As He left this world, Christ gave to His Mother a man, a human being, to be like a son for her: John. He entrusted him to her. And, as a consequence of this giving and entrusting, Mary became the mother of John. The Mother of God became the Mother of man. From that hour, John “took her to his own home” and became the earthly guardian of the Mother of his Master; for sons have the right and duty to care for their mother. John became by Christ’s will the son of the Mother of God. And in John every human being became her child.

The Mother’s Presence

The words “he took her to his own home” can be taken in the literal sense as referring to the place where he lived. Mary’s motherhood in our regard is manifested in a particular way in the places where she meets us: her dwelling places in which a special presence of the Mother is felt. There are many such dwelling places. They are of all kinds: from a special corner in the home or little wayside shrines adorned with an image of the Mother of God, to chapels and churches built in her honor. However, in certain places the Mother’s presence is felt in a particularly vivid way. These places sometimes radiate their light over a great distance and draw people from afar. Their radiance may extend over a diocese, a whole nation, or at times over several countries and even continents. These places are the Marian sanctuaries or shrines. In all these places that unique testament of the Crucified Lord is wonderfully actualized: in them man feels that he is entrusted and confided to Mary. He goes there in order to be with her as with his Mother; he opens his heart to her and speaks to her about everything: he

“takes her to his own home,” that is to say, he brings her into all his problems, which at times are difficult. His own problems and those of other, the problems of the family, of societies, of nations, and of the whole of humanity.

Through God’s Mercy

At Fatima these words resound as one particular echo of the experiences not only of the Portuguese nation but also of so many other countries and peoples on this earth; indeed, they echo the experience of modern



mankind as a whole, the whole of the human family. And so I come here today because on this very day last year, in Saint Peter’s Square in Rome, the attempt on the Pope’s life was made, in mysterious coincidence with the anniversary of the first apparition at Fatima, which occurred on May 13, 1917. And so, today I am here. I have come in order to thank Divine Providence in this place, which the Mother of God seems to have chosen in a particular way. *Misericordiae Domini, quia non sumus consumpti* (Through God’s mercy we were spared; cf. Lam 3:22), I repeat once more with the prophet.

Spiritual Motherhood

From the time when Jesus, dying on the Cross, said to John: “Behold, your mother”;

from the time when “the disciple took her to his own home”, the mystery of the spiritual motherhood of Mary has been actualized boundlessly in history. Motherhood means caring for the life of the child. Since Mary is the mother of us all, her care for the life of man is universal. The care of a mother embraces her child totally. Mary’s motherhood has its beginning in her motherly care for Christ. In Christ, at the foot of the Cross, she accepted John, and in John she accepted all of us totally. Mary embraces us all with special solicitude in the Holy Spirit. For as we profess in our Creed, He is “the Giver of life.” It is He who gives the fullness of life, open toward eternity.

Mary’s spiritual motherhood is therefore a sharing in the power of the Holy Spirit, of “the Giver of life.” It is the humble service of her who says of herself: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38). In the light of the mystery of Mary’s spiritual motherhood, let us seek to understand the extraordinary message, which began on May, 13, 1917, to resound throughout the world from Fatima, continuing for five months until October 13 of the same year.

Convert and Repent

The Church has always taught and continues to proclaim that God’s revelation was brought to completion in Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of that revelation, and that “no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord” (*Dei Verbum*, 4). The Church evaluates and judges private revelations by the criterion of conformity with that single public Revelation. If the Church has accepted the message of Fatima, it is above all because that message contains a truth and a call whose basic content is the truth and the call of the Gospel itself. “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15): these are the first words that the Messiah addressed to humanity. The message of Fatima is, in its basic nucleus, a call to conversion and repentance, as in the Gospel. The Lady of the message seems to have read with special insight the “signs of the times,” the signs of our time. The call to repentance is a motherly one, and at the same time it is strong and decisive. The love that “rejoices in the truth” (cf. 1 Cor 13:6) is capable of being clear-cut and firm. The call to repentance is linked, as always, with a call to prayer. In harmony with the tradition of many centuries, the Lady of the message indicates the Rosary, which can rightly be defined as “Mary’s prayer”: the prayer in which she feels particularly united with us. She herself prays with us.

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Consecration: Two Hearts United and Pierced

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The rosary prayer embraces the problems of the Church, of the See of Saint Peter, the problems of the whole world. In it we also remember sinners, that they may be converted and saved, and the souls in Purgatory.

When Jesus on the Cross said: “Woman, behold, your son” (Jn 19: 26), in a new way He opened His Mother’s Heart, the Immaculate Heart, and revealed to it the new dimensions and extent of the love to which she was called in the Holy Spirit by the power of the sacrifice of the Cross. In the words of Fatima we seem to find this dimension of motherly love, whose range covers the whole of man’s path towards God; the path that leads through this world and that goes, through Purgatory, beyond this world. The solicitude of the Mother of the Savior is solicitude for the work of salvation: the work of her Son. It is solicitude for the salvation, the eternal salvation, of all.

In the light of a mother’s love we understand the whole message of the Lady of Fatima. The greatest obstacle to man’s journey towards God is sin, perseverance in sin, and, finally, denial of God. The deliberate blotting out of God from the world of human thought. The detachment from him of the whole of man’s earthly activity. The rejection of God by man. In reality, the eternal salvation of man is only in God. Man’s rejection of God, if it becomes definitive, leads logically to God’s rejection of man (cf. Mt 7:23; 10:33), to damnation. Can the Mother who, with all the force of the love that she fosters in the Holy Spirit, desires everyone’s salvation keep silence on what undermines the very bases of their salvation?

No, she cannot. And so, while the message of Our Lady of Fatima is a motherly one, it is also strong and decisive. It sounds severe. It sounds like John the Baptist speaking on the banks of the Jordan. It invites to repentance. It gives a warning. It calls to prayer. It recommends the Rosary. The message is addressed to every human being. The love of the Savior’s Mother reaches every place touched by the work of salvation. Her care extends to every individual of our time, and to all the societies, nations and peoples. Societies menaced by apostasy, threatened by moral degradation. The collapse of morality involves the collapse of societies.

Meaning of Consecration

On the Cross Christ said: “Woman, behold, your son!” With these words He opened in a new way His Mother’s Heart. A little later, the Roman soldier’s spear pierced the side of the Crucified One. That pierced Heart became a sign of the Redemption achieved through the death of the Lamb of God. The Immaculate Heart of Mary, opened with the words “Woman, behold, your son!”, is spiritually united with the Heart of her Son opened by the soldier’s spear. Mary’s Heart was opened by the same love for man and for the world with which Christ loved man and the world, offering Himself for them on the Cross, until the soldier’s spear struck that blow.

Consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary means drawing near, through the Mother’s intercession, to the very Fountain of life that sprang from Golgotha. This Fountain pours forth unceasingly Redemption and grace. In it reparation is made continually for the sins of the world. It is a ceaseless source of new life and holiness. Consecrating the world to the Immaculate Heart of the Mother means returning beneath the Cross of the Son. It means consecrating this world to the pierced Heart of the Savior, bringing it back to the very source of its Redemption. Redemption is always greater than man’s sin and the “sin of the world.” The power of Redemption is infinitely superior to the whole range of evil in man and the world. The Heart of the Mother is aware of this, more than any other heart in the whole universe, visible and invisible. And so she calls us. She not only calls us to be converted: she calls us to accept her motherly help to return to the source of Redemption.

Love for all persons

Consecrating ourselves to Mary means accepting her help to offer ourselves and the whole of mankind to Him who is Holy, infinitely Holy; it means accepting her help by having recourse to her motherly Heart, which beneath the Cross was opened to love for every

human being, for the whole world in order to offer the world, the individual human being, mankind as a whole, and all the nations to Him who is infinitely Holy. God’s holiness showed itself in the Redemption of man, of the world, of the whole of mankind, and of the nations: a Redemption brought about through the Sacrifice of the Cross. “For their sake I consecrate myself,” Jesus had said (Jn 17:19). By the power of Redemption the world and man have been consecrated. They have been consecrated to Him who is infinitely Holy. They have been offered and entrusted to Love itself, merciful Love. The Mother of Christ calls us, invites us to join with the Church of the living God in the consecration of the world, in this act of confiding by which the world, mankind as a whole, the nations, and each individual person are presented to the Eternal Father with the power of the Redemption won by Christ. They are offered in the Heart of the Redeemer which was pierced on the Cross.

Rooted in the Gospel

The appeal of the Lady of the message of Fatima is so deeply rooted in the Gospel and the whole of Tradition that the Church feels a commitment is imposed on her by the message. The Church has responded through the Servant of God Pius XII (whose episcopal ordination took place precisely on May 13, 1917): he consecrated the human race and especially the Peoples of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) and its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), the Second Vatican Council amply illustrated the reasons for the link between the Church and the world of today. Furthermore, its teaching on Mary’s special place in the mystery of Christ and the Church bore mature fruit in Paul VI’s action in calling Mary Mother of the Church.

My heart is oppressed when I see the sin of the world, but it also rejoices with hope as I once more do what has been done by my Predecessors, when they consecrated the world to the Heart of the Mother, when they consecrated especially to that Heart those peoples which particularly need to be consecrated. Doing this means consecrating the world to Him who is infinite Holiness. This Holiness means Redemption. It means a love more powerful than evil. No “sin of the world” can ever overcome this Love. Once more this act is being done. Mary’s appeal is not for just once. Her appeal must be taken up by generation after generation, in accordance with the ever new “signs of the times.”“ It must be unceasingly returned to. It must ever be taken up anew.

Pope St. John Paul II

Reflection on June MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that our life may be a splendid gift for God and our brothers and sisters.

*“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”
(Jn 15:13)*

By His life, Jesus has revealed the secret for giving life its true meaning: making of it a gift. If we look at His life, we not only see that He gave His life for us on the Cross, but also that He gave Himself every day to every person He met, with no discrimination. Let us recall some people whom we encounter in the Gospel: the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, the Apostles and many others. Each of them encounters true Life as they encounter Jesus and His gaze of love and mercy. Jesus teaches us that to make of our life a gift means to go out from our ego and to give the love we have in our hearts. A Christ-like love is marked by humility and freedom of heart that brings peace and joy to others. To give one’s life means to enter into Jesus’ logic of sacrificial love.

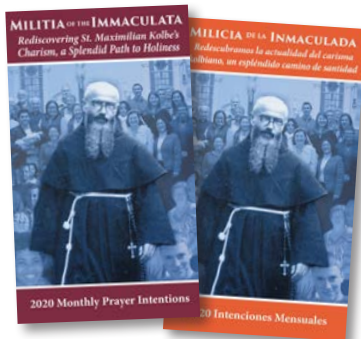
Turning to St. Maximilian Kolbe, we can say that his whole life was spent as a gift for the spiritual life and happiness of his brethren. His deepest desire was to consume himself in work for the conversion and sanctification of all, without distinction, as he wrote in one of his articles addressed to MI members, in December 1937. *“Let us sacrifice ourselves, offering to the Immaculata our humiliations, sufferings, failures. Let us sacrifice our belongings, offering a portion of our goods.... Let us reawaken within us all, without any exception, a wise concern for the salvation and the sanctification of our neighbor, whether he is nearby or far away, including even those who are complete strangers to our nationality and race, and let us carry out all this through the Immaculata, Mediatrix of all graces, of any grace of conversion and sanctification. We are actually all brothers and sisters, since we have one common heavenly Mother, the Immacula-*

ta, one common Father who is in heaven, and one common elder Brother, Jesus, Man and God” (KW 1218).

The greatest good Fr. Maximilian offered while in the Auschwitz concentration camp was his very life. In the midst of the abuse and dehumanizing treatment imposed by the Nazis on their victims, he continued his mission, proclaiming the Love of Jesus Crucified and the sure hope that the Immaculata’s maternal care inspires. *“If each person turns to the Immaculata as a child turns to his own mother, and reflects on what he could do in his own situation, in the conditions and circumstance in which he lives, she will suggest the most appropriate ideas with the aim of winning over the greatest number of souls possible for her and for her Militia” (Ib.).*

Fr. Kolbe could not spare the millions of prisoners from physical death but, with “maternal” dedication, he sustained and revived spiritually countless fellow prisoners. By laying down his life for the young sergeant Francis Gajowniczek, *“Father Maximilian... in a particular way made himself like Christ” (Pope St. John Paul II, October 10, 1982).* He became a sign of victory over the system of hatred that reigned in Auschwitz. Francis survived the war and died at the age of 95. Love alone overcomes hatred!

(from the MI International Office)



2020 MI Intentions leaflets are available in English and Spanish
Request them from the MI National Office

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.



A Heart on Fire

On his way to Poland by sea, St. Maximilian journaled these Spirit-filled words, which speak volumes about his vision for MI members (KW 991 Q).

Q—On the ship Conte Rosso, April 23, 1933

Maria!
MI

To achieve the goal of the MI as soon as possible, namely, to win the whole world and every single soul who now lives or will live until the end of the world for the Immaculata, and through her for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Also, we must make sure that no one removes the standard of the Immaculata from any soul. We must constantly strengthen the love for the Immaculata in souls, tighten the bond of love that exists between her and souls, so that they may become one with her—become her herself; so that she herself may live and love (act) in them and through them. Just as she is of Jesus and of God, so each soul will become of Jesus and of God through her and in her, in a much more perfect way than either without her or not through her, if that were even possible.

Then souls will love the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus as they had never loved Him before, because, like her, and in ways they have never experienced before, they will plunge into the

mysteries of Love: the Cross and the Eucharist. Through her, God's Love shall kindle the world, set it on fire, and lead to the "assumption" of souls through Love.

When will all this happen? The divinization of the whole world in her and through her? The first *essential condition*: those who are required to work must themselves give the example; in order to understand this spirit they must fill them selves with it; in order to become instruments of the Immaculata, so that she herself may act in them, they must give themselves up to her without limits.

First of all, they themselves must belong to her, deepen their unlimited gift of themselves to her, tighten the bond of love with her, become her herself, so that she may act through them and in their souls. This is a *most crucial condition*. She will act through them only insofar as they belong to her. Nothing, therefore, may remain [that comes] from the souls themselves. They must belong to her *without limits*.

There is no fixed *formula*. In fact the more *limitless* the formula is, the better.

The *second condition*: always wear the Miraculous Medal, for it is an "integral" condition: it complements (although it is not essential). We wear it because the Immaculata urged us to do so and has promised her protection to those who do so.

We sorely need such protection. Experience shows that when the devil wants to lead someone astray, the first thing he does is to make one find some pretext to lay aside one's Miraculous Medal. How powerful is the Immaculata's protection!

That is therefore an important condition: "integralis" although not "essentialis." If it should happen, because of more difficult circumstances, that no more Miraculous Medals are available, the MI would not cease to exist; the medal is an external sign of our total consecration to her.

On these conditions (the first of which is essential), we unite ourselves to her; we become her instruments; we belong to her and actually become one with her. The MI act of consecration illustrates these ideas.

The *means*: are those that she herself desires. During the apparition of the Miraculous Medal, she dictated an ejaculatory prayer. That is our prayer; in it we include all men. She gave us the Miraculous Medal, so that is the bullet [we need] to strike hearts.

In addition, any other means may be used, as long as they are legitimate; anything that fervor and prudence may suggest—in a word, whatever Love commands us, a love without limits: her. Whatever this Loving Mother of ours, Mother of the whole world and of each and every soul, wishes to achieve through us.

All inventions should be first in her service and only later for other purposes: art, literature, theater, cinema, books, journalism, radio, etc., etc. But before everything else we ourselves must be hers, even to the utter annihilation of our ego, to a *total holocaust*, without reserve and without limits ("penance, penance, penance"). Everything for her sake, then: our soul, our body, all the faculties of the soul and of the body, talents, energy, science, art, etc., etc... everything! Everything: the past, the present, and future, life, death, eternity.

In a word, everything, everything without even the slightest, tiniest reservation.

O Immaculate Mama, glory to you forever!





St. John Paul II and the Franciscan Conventuals

Here is what he said himself: “I will tell you that, as Archbishop of Krakow, I lived near a very ancient Franciscan church, and from time to time I went there to pray, to make the ‘Via Crucis’ and to visit the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows. Unforgettable moments for me!”

These words are found in the manuscript of a speech he gave on November 5, 1978, in Assisi, shortly after he had been elected Pope.

In those brief words, he reveals his deep feelings about that Franciscan place. How did his connection to it and his feelings for it come about?

Karol Wojtyła (1920-2005) was involved with the Conventual Franciscans in Krakow far back as 1938, in his early youth when he was a student. He made contact with them again while he was a laborer in the Solvay mine during the Second World War. After he was ordained a priest, he continued to stop by the Conventual Franciscan Basilica. When he became the Archbishop of Krakow, he resided in the bishop’s palace, right across the street from our church and friary. He would often be in the Basilica as early as 6:00 a.m. for Morning Prayer. It was his custom to sit in the last pew at the end of the church entrance. He would do an hour of meditation and recite the Office. He would often and willingly stop by the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows and he would visit the Chapel of the Lord’s Passion to pray the Stations of the Cross. He would come in at 11:00 p.m. on New Year’s Eve for personal Eucharistic adoration, then, celebrate the midnight Mass and give a homily.

However, his relations with the Conventuals were not confined to the friary in Krakow. Before he was elected Pope, while he was still the Archbishop of Krakow, he visited more than twenty communities of

our friars in Poland and abroad. He went to Niepokalanów five times... and visited the old Seraphicum International College on Via San Teodoro in Rome, (where the Militia of the Immaculata was founded).

When John Paul II was elected to the Chair of St. Peter in 1978, [he] would often reminisce about his “unforgettable moments” in Krakow: “How dear to my heart this Franciscan church is, along with that image of Our Lady of Sorrows. I would often go there to entrust many situations to Mary’s goodness, especially concerning my ministry as a priest and later, as a bishop. How many graces, how much good counsel I gained from that place, a place that had been visited for five centuries by generations from Krakow and by many pilgrims from Poland and from all over the world. Today I thank God for all the gifts granted to me through the intercession of Mary venerated in the Image of Our Lady of Sorrows” (1998).

John Paul II’s sermons made many references to Franciscan spirituality. During the [1980] spiritual retreat, he began to write his testament, where he included those words so dear to our long Franciscan tradition: “*In life and in death [I am] Totus Tuus through Mary Immaculate*” (*Testament of John Paul II*, 1980).

Let us take a look at the time of his Petrine ministry. During his pontificate, he visited a total of twenty-four Conventual places, in Italy and around the world.

Our Order is indebted to John Paul II for the canonization of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe (1894-1941), as a Martyr of Charity, on October 10, 1982, at St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome.

During the celebration of five different beatifications, the Pope raised seventeen Conventual friars to the honor of the altars, including [Niepokalanów] friars, all

martyrs of World War II, beatified on June 13, 1999, in Warsaw, Poland.

One should stress that when the Pope spoke about contemporary saints, he mentioned our St. Maximilian more than any other. Here are the words of the Pope: “I am very deeply linked to this saint, to his beatification, to his canonization, to his great mission, to the memory of his great suffering and to the memory of Auschwitz. All this has been elevated, thanks to his martyrdom, to a higher value. He has become a little piece of the Kingdom of God in Poland and throughout the world” (from an impromptu speech, delivered in 1997).

John Paul II saw Father Kolbe as a special gift of Providence. He is a witness of Christ for today, a Martyr of Divine love, a teacher of charity towards one’s neighbor, a prophet of a new “Marian era”, a “Francis” for the twentieth century, an apostle of modern mass media, the Patron Saint of Our Difficult Century, (the title John Paul immediately ascribed to Kolbe after his beatification in 1971), and finally, the Prophet of the Civilization of Love.

Ever since he was Archbishop of Krakow, he was an expert authority on Maximilian Kolbe; one could say he was the best there outside of Franciscan circles. He was a connoisseur of St. Maximilian Kolbe’s life and an interpreter of his apostolic activity and martyrdom. When he became Pope, he showed that one can broaden one’s horizons and ways of thinking about the Saint of Auschwitz, as well as the interpretation of his holiness, especially regarding the new dimensions of the Franciscan charism offered by our Martyr of Charity. It is fascinating that St. John Paul II remembered, with gratitude, the moments he spent “with the Conventuals.”

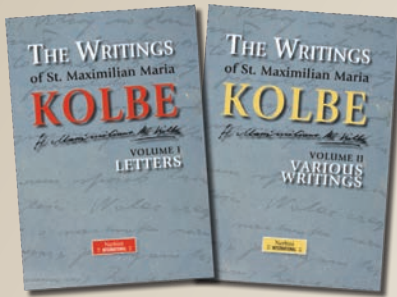
Moreover, he remained faithful to all that he had gained during his youth from the church in Krakow, a church he “lived near for many years, and often visited” (1986) and to which he returned so many times, “bringing with him his heart and his prayers” (1998).

(Excerpts from *The Conventuals and the 100th Birthday of St. John Paul II*, by Fr. Sławomir Gajda in OFMConv.net)

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