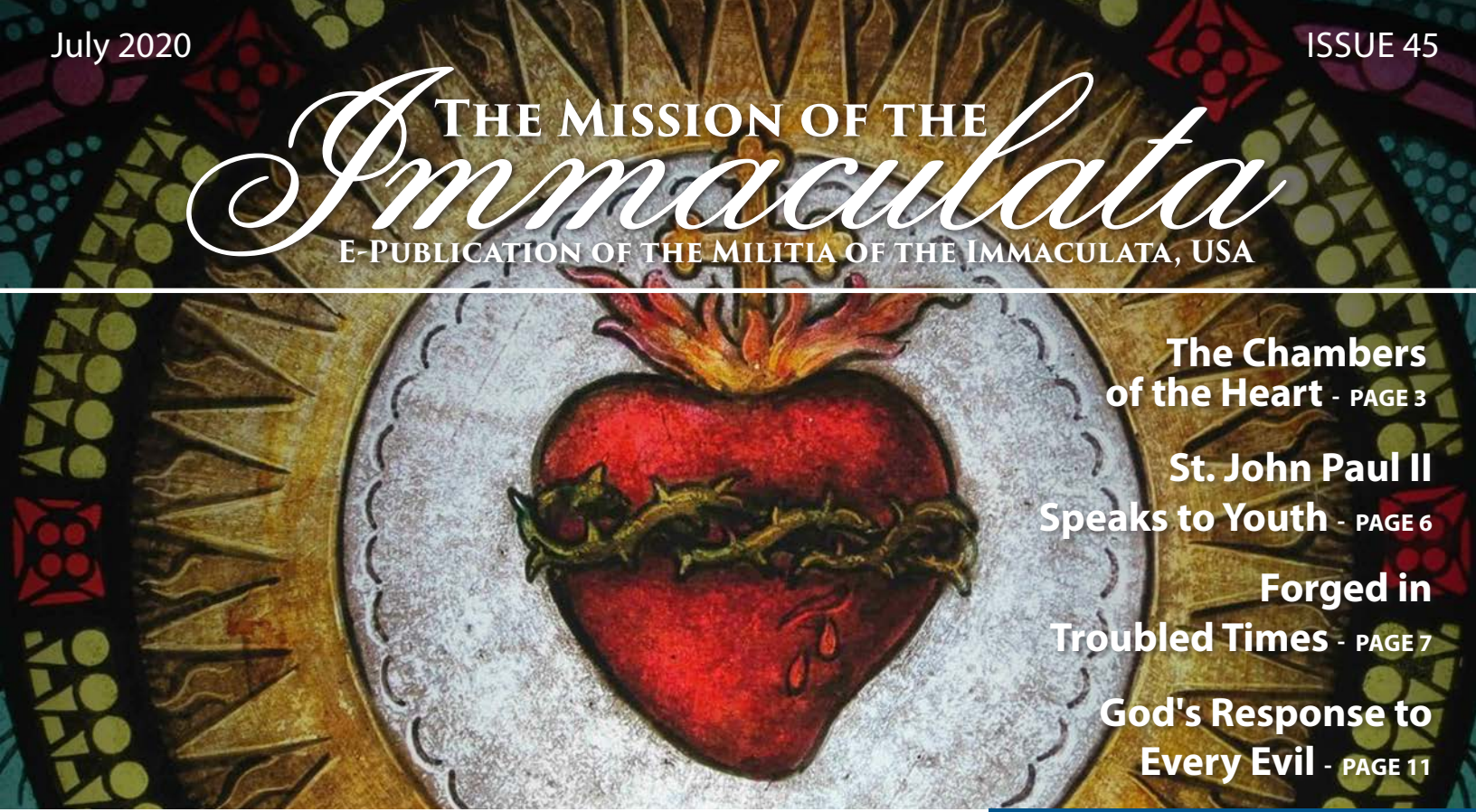


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The Two Great Gifts

By John W. Galten, MI National President



Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

Maria! We continue our pursuit of the work of the Holy Spirit and His Spouse the Immaculata in this, the age of the Church. We are endeavoring to see the connection between the two great gifts promised by Christ, which would turn all sorrow into joy: the Promise of the Holy Spirit and the Gift of Mary at the foot of the Cross. This connection fascinated St. Maximilian, our founder and spiritual mentor, to the extent that he spent his whole life seeking the meaning of this divine/human mystery. His question, “Who are you O Immaculata?” grew into “Who are You O Holy Immaculate One (the Holy Spirit) and who are you, O Immaculata, His co-worker of the Truth?” This second question is of my own making, not a direct quote, from St. Maximilian’s writings. It, if you will, makes up the summation of his life’s work as recorded in KW 1304-1334. Remember, you can order *The Writings* in the two-volume hardcover edition or in e-book format (see the reference on the last page of this newsletter). Now, back to Jesus’ words in Chapter 15 of St. John’s Gospel.

Recall from our previous columns that Jesus at the Last Supper reveals to the Apostles the great secrets of the Kingdom—the Promise and role of the Holy Spirit—and what these stupendous, living mysteries will mean for our own spiritual lives. One might say that His discourse is the core of the Great Mystery of the coming of God among men and His desire to embrace all of them.

Jesus begins Chapter 15, giving us the image of the content of the Good News: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.” Jesus speaks of His intimacy with the Father, an intimacy which will be ours as well through

(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

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our faithful intimacy with Christ. Jesus calls us to intimacy with Him: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit.” The fruit of our intimacy with Christ is holiness and the works of justice. He calls us to the apostolate of holiness and obedience to the law of love: love of God and love of our neighbor. Jesus commands that we love one another, the new foundation for a moral, spiritual life. This is the essence of the yoke that we must bear. Here, we have the core of St. Maximilian’s mercy, “love unto victimhood.”

Jesus warns us that we will be hated as He was hated. The world, that is in opposition to Christ, will hate us as it hates the light, which enlightens the path to God. The world hates that path, that light because it demands that we repent and humbly acknowledge the sovereignty of God. The world prefers the hateful cry of Satan, “I will not serve.” Nonetheless, the light has overcome the darkness and not only has He triumphed but He will definitively do so in a spectacular manner at the close of the ages.

We can rightly ask the question, “How shall we do this with the power of the world against us?” This question does not come from the lack of faith, rather it partakes of the question the Immaculata asks of the Archangel, “How is this to be?” Jesus gives us the answer at the end of John 15, the same answer He gave Mary: “But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness to Me, and you also are witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” The Spirit Himself will be the witness in us who must witness Christ to the world. His Holy Word in us will give

us the unshakable conviction, courage and enlightenment to speak the truth and bear any consequences the world might deliver, even death. Whatever might be the consequence for us personally, the Truth will triumph over evil, as it did in Christ’s witness, St. Maximilian’s witness, Mary’s witness at the foot of the Cross; as it will with us.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Immaculata to us are the infinite counterweight to the alluring power of the world that opposes Christ. We as Catholics and as Knights of the Immaculata rely on this rock of truth, the stronghold, the inaccessible castle keep. Let us rejoice and be glad for so great a Savior!

Until next month, “Arise; let us be on our way.”

John W. Galten
MI National President

P.S. The MI Official Prayer Book, *Glorry to God Through the Immaculata!*, is hot off the presses! Request your copy today!

P.P.S. Stay tuned for the trailer of the *new film to introduce people to the MI!* Coming soon!



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:

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The Chambers of the Heart

On a journey to living our total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary - Part One



by Matthew Alderman ©Militia Immaculatae, Inc

“Through the Immaculata and in her, 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 in the mysteries of Love: the Cross and the Eucharist. Through her, God’s Love shall kindle the world, set it on fire.”
(St. Maximilian M. Kolbe, KW 991 Q)

During a leadership retreat, an MI young adult envisioned our consecration as a way to share in Our Lady’s Heart, which may be visualized as having four chambers, just as our physical heart does; four chambers that are connected and interdependent. Another MI young adult, an artist, drew a striking image of St. Maximilian Kolbe (see picture), whose total consecration, by the action of the Holy Spirit, effected a complete transformation into her, and ultimately into Our Lord Jesus Christ. This visual aid may help us to be inspired to

deepen our consecration to Our Lady and its ultimate goal, which is to respond to God’s infinite and gratuitous love by uniting ourselves to the Heart of Jesus Himself and being instruments in drawing our brothers and sisters to Him through our Immaculate Mother.

How may we describe these four chambers? As a sure foundation, let us keep at hand chapters 12-17 of the Gospel of St. John. Here we find the “four chambers” in the words of Jesus Himself, especially in the image of the Vine and the branches, which He employs to describe our relationship with the Most Holy Trinity.

- *Spiritual Life:* Living in the Holy Spirit, in Christ (“Remain in me, as I remain in you” - Jn 15:4)
- *Obedience of Faith:* Living in the Will of God (“Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him” - Jn 14:23; “If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love” - Jn 15: 10)
- *Suffering out of Love:* Embracing redemptive suffering (“Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit” - Jn 12:24; “[The Father] takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit” - Jn 15:2)
- *Heroic Charity:* Loving as He has loved us (“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” - Jn 15:12-13)

Our Lady’s Heart is the perfect personification of Jesus’ words to his disciples then and now. As she treasured His every word and acted on it, so she taught St. Maximilian and does teach us. She does so through her example, inspiration and intercession. “The Immaculata knows the secret of the closest union with the Heart of Jesus” (KW 987 C). Above all, Our Lady reminds us of the most fundamental truth of our Christian life: God’s initiative

comes *first*. During her encounter with St. Elizabeth, she sang, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my savior. For he has looked upon his handmaid’s lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name” (Lk 1:46-49). St. John states it clearly, “In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (1Jn 4:10). *God’s Grace comes first and enables us to respond* to His unimaginable Love by our love for Him and one another.

In an attempt to delve into each “chamber” from this perspective, each month we will look at Jesus first, for He is the full revelation of the Heart of God, and then proceed to consider Mary’s Heart and St. Maximilian’s example. Finally, we will draw some inspiration for our own response.

The presentation of each “chamber of the heart” is not intended to be exhaustive. It aims to encourage everyone to take time, personally and communally, if possible, to *Pray, Ponder and Propose*, with the aid of a few questions and references. We will thus reflect prayerfully on the Word of God, the teaching of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe* and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to each one’s heart.

The results could be marvelous, since we do share the same path of total consecration, yet the Holy Spirit and Our Lady lead each of us to respond in a unique way, according to our personal vocation and diverse circumstances.

In your journal, you may scribble a word or jot a sentence, write a prayer or compose a poem, draw an image or glue a picture... whatever might help you to treasure the inspiration you have received and to resolve to put it into action in your life. Let us embark on this journey with an open and generous heart!

Antonella Di Piazza, FKMI



Spiritual Life

This month we consider the first of the four chambers of the heart.

Before we turn to consider this chamber in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, it is important to ponder what “spiritual life” is. The “spiritual life” is nothing less than this: *the very Divine Life we are given to share through Grace.*

Jesus, the Son of God made man, through His whole life and ministry, and especially His Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and the promised Gift of the Holy Spirit, has revealed to us Divine Life and called each of us to participate in it, both in time, now, and for all eternity. This truth should cause us unceasingly to give Him thanks because God in Christ has restored our human nature to yet a greater dignity than at its beginnings! We are His sons and daughters in the Son! Through Baptism, we become part of the Divine Family and have access to the Life of the Most Holy Trinity as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

The Lord Jesus has not only revealed to us God the Father, Who created each of us out of sheer love, but He has also revealed Himself as the Son, Who is always “one” with the Father and lives an intimate relationship with Him, sharing the same Divine Life, which is boundless Love, the Holy Spirit Himself. Jesus has come to give us this Divine Life and give it to the full (Cf. Jn 10:10; Jn 14-15).

Let us stop and dwell on this arresting truth: The very life of God, which flows eternally within the Most Holy Trinity, reaches us because of God’s unfathomable fruitful Love. We come to share ever more fully in this “Life in the Spirit” or “Life in Christ” primarily through the Sacraments that Jesus has entrusted to the Church, the Word of God, liturgical and personal prayer, and our putting into action His holy will in love. Thus, we may already perceive the interconnectedness of the four “chambers.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the ultimate model of this “Life in the Spirit,” as we can see in every page of the Gospel. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35), led to the desert by the Spirit (cf. Lk 4:1; Mk 1:12; Mt 4:1), and moved by the same Spirit throughout His whole ministry (cf. Lk 4:14; Jn 1:33-34) until its completion in the Paschal Mystery. He has promised His disciples that they would receive this same Spirit, be born from water and the Holy Spirit, strengthened and equipped by the Holy Spirit for the evangelical mission entrusted to them. Additionally, He has made it very clear that the Father and the Son do not ration the Gift of the Spirit, but give Him abundantly!

Jesus is the Way and the Truth and the Life; through His sacred Humanity, we have access to the Father (cf. Jn 15:5-6). “By His incarnation, the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been

made one of us, like us in all things except sin” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 22).

Jesus’ Heart is the perfect mirror of a heart filled with the Holy Spirit and docile to His action, ready to listen always to the Father’s Voice, to accomplish His will and to do His works of love and mercy. His Heart mirrors the beauty and richness of the dignity we have been created for and restored to through the infinite merits of His Blood poured out for us on the Cross. Moreover, His pierced and Eucharistic Heart is not a mere symbol of His Love. His Heart is the actual gateway through which Divine Life overflows unceasingly. It is the way by which our wounded humanity can enter the immense ocean of His Mercy and rise to newness of life.

Our Lady’s Heart is the created human heart that in a unique and incomparably perfect way resembles her Son’s Heart. The grace of her Immaculate Conception signifies her being preserved from any stain of sin and ever filled with the Divine Life (cf. Lk 1:28). This unprecedented grace, uniquely hers, was matched, so to speak, by her willing and active cooperation. Our Lady’s fullness of grace, however, is not to be understood as a privilege separating her from us nor as a stagnant state, but rather as a living, dynamic one! God, Who had loved her first, as He indeed does each of us, kept on pouring His Life into her Immaculate Heart and kept on drawing her ever more fully into His Divine Life, while she offered Him an ever-greater reception of love as she journeyed through life in faith. This “ebb and flow of love” between the Triune God and the Immaculata has brought her to participate in an incomparable way in the history of our salvation, in the divine Plan for *my* redemption.

This is what fascinated *St. Maximilian Kolbe*. The humble woman of

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Spiritual Life

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Nazareth is at the very same time the recipient of God's immeasurable Mercy and the human person who most perfectly reciprocated His love and thus became the blueprint for each of us in our response to Him. However, there is more! Having been called to be the Mother of our Savior and because of His expressed will, she is truly our Mother, Mother of the Church and the disciples. She is always effectively united with the Holy Spirit, her Spouse, in His mission to make each of us participate and grow in Divine Life as He builds up the Body of Christ.

St. Maximilian saw in total consecration to her not only the way to welcome the Mother whom the Lord Jesus Himself has given each one of us but also the path along which we may enter in such an intimate relationship with her as "to become more and more like her." Allowing the Holy Spirit to bring about His wonderful transformation of his heart into the likeness of Jesus' through the intercession of Our Lady, St. Maximilian learned from her "to let himself be led" by the Spirit and to let the Life in the Spirit blossom in him fully. In a special way, she drew him into the mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist. The striking confirmation of this is undoubtedly the greatest manifestation of love he gave by sacrificing his life for a fellow prisoner in Auschwitz.

So now, *how are we to embrace this in our lives?* "Remain in me, as I remain

in you," Jesus keeps repeating (cf. Jn 15:4). "To remain" implies familiarity, mutual intimacy, union, and communion with Him. Our Lord summons each of us to be fully part of the Divine Family into which we have been adopted through our Baptism, thanks to the priceless shedding of His precious Blood on Calvary. "To remain in Him and He in us" means for us, as it did for Our Lady and for every disciple throughout the ages, "to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood" in the Most Holy Eucharist, to encounter Him in the Sacraments and in His Word, and to be transformed by doing His Will in our daily lives.

Certainly, Our Lady experienced the words "Remain in me, as I remain in you" in an entirely unparalleled way, and yet, as we give ourselves to her through total consecration she shares with us the fruits of her own intimate participation in the Divine Life. She shares with us the words and events she "treasured and pondered in her heart," her constant communing with her Son, thus leading us to discover Jesus, "the pearl of great value," "the treasure hidden in the field," and to become willing to give ourselves completely to Him. She teaches us to be attentive, receptive and docile to the Holy Spirit, to discern His promptings, and to echo her Fiat in response to His Voice and her *Magnificat* in gratitude for God's providential care in the unfolding of our lives. As a mother, she prays with us and for us. She invites us to pray with the inspired words of the Psalms, which nourished her prayer as we can see through her canticle. She calls us to participate actively in the liturgy of the Church, just as she did the first disciples, who devoted themselves with her to constant prayer, to the Apostles' instruction and to the breaking of the bread (cf. Acts 1:14; 2:42).

Pray, Ponder, Propose

Take some time during this month to reflect on the first *Chamber of the Heart – Spiritual Life*.

- ✓ Invoke the Holy Spirit.
- ✓ As you re-read the paragraphs about Jesus and Mary's Life in the Spirit, consider the *Gospel* passages quoted. Feel free to recall other accounts that are implied. Look them up, ponder them in prayer, and let the Word of God speak to your heart.
- ✓ Read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nos. 430-478; 484-507; 1691-1729; 2598-2622.
- ✓ Reflect on *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe* that illustrate his understanding of the Immaculata as the blueprint and model of redeemed humanity, how through total consecration we may "become like her," and what he suggested for fostering the "spiritual life" – KW 508, 987 E, 991 Q, 1071, 1100.
- ✓ **Questions for reflection:** How do I understand "Life in the Spirit" in light of Scripture, the *Catechism* and the teachings of St. Maximilian? What has hindered my growth? How could I become more open and receptive to the working of the Holy Spirit in my life in union with the Immaculata? Consider how to draw from the rich Catholic tradition to learn and practice *discernment* in daily life and to grow in love for the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus and the liturgical prayer of the Church.
- ✓ Take your journal and put down in writing what may be relevant for your journey at this time.
- ✓ Close with a prayer.

MI

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS



St. John Paul II Speaks to Youth



During World Youth Day 2000, the Great Jubilee Year, St. John Paul II said, "I see in you the 'morning watchmen' (cf. Is 21:11-12.)" His words re-echo for us today!

Dear friends, to believe in Jesus today, to follow Jesus as Peter, Thomas, and the first Apostles and witnesses did, demands of us, just as it did in the past, that we **take a stand for Him**, almost to the point at times of a new martyrdom: the martyrdom of those who, today as yesterday, are called to **go against the tide** in order to follow the divine Master, to follow "the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev 14:4). Perhaps you will not have to shed your blood, but you will certainly be asked to be faithful to Christ! A faithfulness to be lived in the circumstances of everyday life: I am thinking of how difficult it is in today's world for engaged couples to be faithful to purity before marriage. I think of how the mutual fidelity of young married couples is put to the test. I think of friendships and how easily the temptation to be disloyal creeps in. I think also of how those who have chosen the path of special consecration have to struggle to persevere in their dedication to God and to their brothers and sisters.

I think of those who want to live a life of solidarity and love in a world where the only things that seem to matter are the logic of profit and one's personal or group interest. I think too of those who work for peace and who see new outbreaks of war erupt and grow worse in different parts of the world; I think of those who work for human freedom and see people still slaves of themselves and of one another. I think of those who work to ensure love and respect for human life and who see life so often attacked and the respect due to life so often flouted. In such a world is it hard to believe? Yes! It is hard. There is no need to hide it. But **with the help of grace it can be done. It is Jesus** that you seek when you dream of happiness.

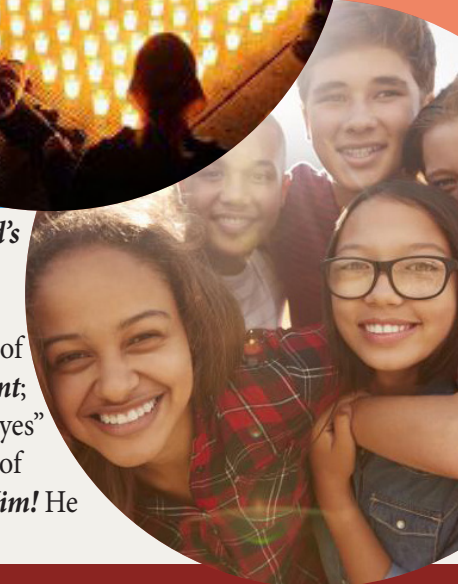
He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal.

In the struggle against sin you are not alone: so many like **you are struggling and through the Lord's grace are winning!** You have come together to declare that in the new century you will not let yourselves be made into tools of violence and destruction; you will defend peace, paying the price in your person if need be. You will not resign yourselves to a world where other human beings die of hunger, remain illiterate and have no work. **You will defend life at every moment of its development;** you will strive with all your strength to make this earth ever more livable for all people. In saying "yes" to Christ, you say "yes" to all your noblest ideals. I pray that He will reign in your hearts and in all of humanity in the new century and the new millennium. **Have no fear of entrusting yourselves to Him!** He will guide you, He will grant you the strength to follow Him every day and in every situation.

May Mary most holy, the Virgin who said "yes" to God throughout her whole life, may Saints Peter and Paul and all the Saints who have lighted the Church's journey down the ages, keep you always faithful to this holy resolve!

To each and every one of you I offer my blessing with affection.

John Paul II





Forged in Troubled Times St. Catherine of Siena

In our troubled times, we do well to turn to our powerful allies, the Saints who fought the good fight and won it! St. Catherine of Siena, a Doctor of the Church, is certainly one of the great champions of the Faith. Let's look up to her humble and fearless example as we engage in the spiritual warfare for the soul of our culture. Pope Benedict XVI's meditation offers a thorough introduction to her message.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today I would like to talk to you about a woman who played an eminent role in the history of the Church: St. Catherine of Siena. The century in which she lived — the 14th — was a troubled period in the life of the Church and throughout the social context of Italy and Europe. Yet, even in the most difficult times, the Lord does not cease to bless His People, bringing forth Saints who give a jolt to minds and hearts, provoking conversion and renewal.

Catherine is one of these and still today speaks to us and impels us to walk courageously toward holiness to be ever more fully disciples of the Lord. Born in Siena in 1347, into a very large family, she died in Rome in 1380. When Catherine was 16 years old, motivated by a vision of St. Dominic, she entered the Third Order of the Dominicans, the female branch known as the *Mantellate*. While living at home, she confirmed her vow of virginity

made privately when she was still an adolescent and dedicated herself to prayer, penance and works of charity, especially for the benefit of the sick.

When the fame of her holiness spread, she became the protagonist of an intense activity of spiritual guidance for people from every walk of life: nobles and politicians, artists and ordinary people, consecrated men and women and religious, including Pope Gregory XI who was living at Avignon in that period and whom she energetically and effectively urged to return to Rome.

She traveled widely to press for the internal reform of the Church and to foster peace among the States. It was also for this reason that Venerable [now Saint] Pope John Paul II chose to declare her Co-Patroness of Europe: may the Old Continent never forget the Christian roots that are at the origin of its progress and continue to draw from the Gospel the fundamental values that assure justice and harmony.

Like many of the Saints, Catherine knew great suffering. Some even thought that they should not trust her, to the point that in 1374, six years before her death, the General Chapter of the Dominicans summoned her to Florence to interrogate her. They appointed Raymund of Capua, a learned and humble Friar and a future Master General of the Order, as her spiritual guide. Having become her

confessor and also her “spiritual son,” he wrote a first complete biography of the Saint. She was canonized in 1461.

The teaching of Catherine, who learned to read with difficulty and learned to write in adulthood, is contained in the *Dialogue of Divine Providence* or *Libro della Divina Dottrina*, a masterpiece of spiritual literature, in her *Epistolario* and in the collection of her *Prayers*.

Her teaching is endowed with such excellence that in 1970 the Servant of God [now Saint] Paul VI declared her a Doctor of the Church, a title that was added to those of Co-Patroness of the City of Rome — at the wish of Bl. Pius IX — and of Patroness of Italy — in accordance with the decision of Venerable Pius XII.

In a vision that was ever present in Catherine's heart and mind Our Lady presented her to Jesus who gave her a splendid ring, saying to her: “I, your Creator and Savior, espouse you in the faith, that you will keep ever pure until you celebrate your eternal nuptials with me in Heaven” (Bl. Raimondo da Capua, *S. Caterina da Siena, Legenda maior*, n. 115, Siena 1998). This ring was visible to her alone. In this extraordinary episode we see the vital center of Catherine's religious sense, and of all authentic spirituality: Christocentrism.

For her Christ was like the spouse with whom a relationship of intimacy, communion and faithfulness exists; He was the best beloved whom she loved above any other good. This profound union with the Lord is illustrated by another episode in the life of this outstanding mystic: the exchange of hearts. According to Raymond of Capua who passed on the confidences Catherine received, the Lord Jesus appeared to her “holding in His holy hands a human heart, bright red and shining.” He opened her side and put the heart within her saying: “Dearest daughter, as I took your heart away from you the other day, now, you see, I am giving you mine, so that you can go on living with it forever” (*ibid.*). Catherine truly lived St. Paul's words, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Gal 2:20).

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Forged in Troubled Times St. Catherine of Siena

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Like the Sienese Saint, every believer feels the need to be conformed with the sentiments of the Heart of Christ to love God and his neighbor as Christ Himself loves. And we can all let our hearts be transformed and learn to love like Christ in a familiarity with Him that is nourished by prayer, by meditation on the Word of God and by the Sacraments, above all by receiving Holy Communion frequently and with devotion. Catherine also belongs to the throng of Saints devoted to the Eucharist with which I concluded my Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (cf. n. 94). Dear brothers and sisters, the Eucharist is an extraordinary gift of love that God continually renews to nourish our journey of faith, to strengthen our hope and to inflame our charity, to make us more and more like Him.

A true and authentic spiritual family was built up around such a strong and genuine personality; people fascinated by the moral authority of this young woman with a most exalted lifestyle were at times also impressed by the mystical phenomena they witnessed, such as her frequent ecstasies. Many put themselves at Catherine's service and above all considered it a privilege to receive spiritual guidance from her. They called her "mother" because, as her spiritual children, they drew

spiritual nourishment from her. Today too the Church receives great benefit from the exercise of spiritual motherhood by so many women, lay and consecrated, who nourish souls with thoughts of God, who strengthen the people's faith and direct Christian life towards ever loftier peaks. "Son, I say to you and call you," Catherine wrote to one of her spiritual sons, Giovanni Sabbatini, a Carthusian, "inasmuch as I give birth to you in continuous prayers and desire in the presence of God, just as a mother gives birth to a son" (*Epistolario, Lettera n. 141: To Fr. Giovanni de' Sabbatini*). She would usually address the Dominican Fr. Bartolomeo de Dominicis with these words: "Most beloved and very dear brother and son in Christ sweet Jesus."

Another trait of Catherine's spirituality is linked to the gift of tears. They express an exquisite, profound sensitivity, a capacity for being moved and for tenderness. Many Saints have had the gift of tears, re-

"They [those who put their trust in God] act like true knights who never consider any rising storm so great that they are daunted by it. They have no fear because it is not in themselves that they trust. No, all their faith is in God, Whom they love, because they see that He is strong, and that He is willing and able to help them. So, with Saint Paul they say very humbly, 'I can do all things in Christ crucified, Who is in me and Who strengthens me.'"

St. Catherine of Siena

newing the emotion of Jesus Himself who did not hold back or hide His tears at the tomb of His friend Lazarus and at the grief of Mary and Martha or at the sight of Jerusalem during His last days on this earth. According to Catherine, the tears of Saints are mingled with the Blood of Christ, of which she spoke in vibrant tones and with symbolic images that were very effective: "Remember Christ crucified, God and man.... Make your aim the Crucified Christ, hide in the wounds of the Crucified Christ and drown in the Blood of the Crucified Christ" (*Epistolario, Lettera n. 21: Ad uno il cui nome si tace* [to one who

remains anonymous]). Here we can understand why, despite her awareness of the human shortcomings of priests, Catherine always felt very great reverence for them: through the Sacraments and the word they dispense the saving power of Christ's Blood. The Sienese Saint always invited the sacred ministers, including the Pope whom she called "sweet Christ on earth," to be faithful to their responsibilities, motivated always and only by her profound and constant love of the Church. She said before she died: "in leaving my body, truly I have consumed and given my life in the Church and for the Holy Church, which is for me a most unique grace" (Raimondo da Capua, *S. Caterina da Siena, Legenda maior*, n. 363). Hence we learn from St. Catherine the most sublime science: to know and love Jesus Christ and His Church. In the *Dialogue of Divine Providence*, she describes Christ, with an unusual image, as a bridge flung between Heaven and earth. This bridge consists of three great stairways constituted by the feet, the side and the mouth of Jesus. Rising by these stairways the soul passes through the three stages of every path to sanctification: detachment from sin, the practice of the virtues and of love, sweet and loving union with God.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us learn from St. Catherine to love Christ and the Church with courage, intensely and sincerely. Therefore let us make our own St. Catherine's words that we read in the *Dialogue of Divine Providence* at the end of the chapter that speaks of Christ as a bridge: "out of mercy You have washed us in His Blood, out of mercy You have wished to converse with creatures. O crazed with love! It did not suffice for You to take flesh, but You also wished to die!... O mercy! My heart drowns in thinking of You: for no matter where I turn to think, I find only mercy" (chapter 30, pp. 79-80). Thank you.

Pope Benedict XVI,

General Audience, November 24, 2010

Multiple articles and other reliable resources on St. Catherine of Siena, including her writings and the Papal Documents regarding her, are available on the website www.drawnbylove.com

Reflection on July MI Intention

O Immaculata, please intercede that our Christian life may be a luminous witness of faith, hope and charity.

“Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality.” (Rm 12:9-13)

The Apostle Paul, after having spoken about the relationship with God and within the community, highlights the main characteristic of the disciples of Christ: fraternal and universal charity. In very direct terms, he points out the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity we are called to practice in our lives.

St. Paul invites us to rejoice in hope. Many times we experience that evil tries to rob us of hope. The Apostle exhorts us to be grounded in God, in whom our hope find its true foundation. He reminds us to endure tribulations, reminding us that our strength comes not from ourselves but from God. The strength we receive from Him enables us to stand strong precisely when we surrender ourselves to Him. Finally, St. Paul urges us to attend to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

In his famous hymn of charity (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-13), which St. Paul writes to the community of Corinth, he states that of all virtues charity is the greatest. Reciprocity and fraternity are the hallmarks of Christian love. True charity brings forth joy, responsibility and freedom. Authentic love manifests itself in prompt service to others, carried out with perseverance, tenacity and joy. In other words, the life of a Christian is marked by peacefulness, fortitude, patience and joyful trust in God.

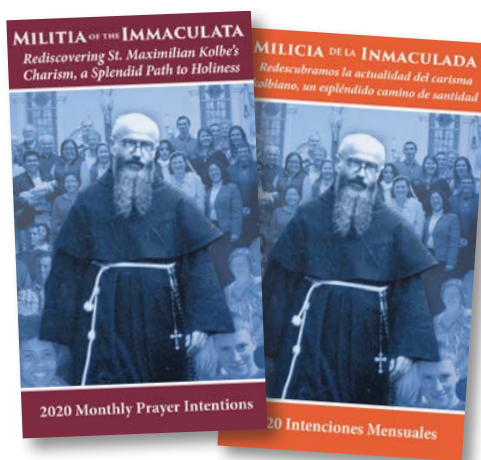
St. Maximilian Kolbe spoke often of the virtue of charity. One good reference is found in an article about “The Religion of Love,” which he wrote in 1936. He stated, *“It is evident... that Jesus deeply desired that a sincere love reign among men. The Apostles understood Jesus’ desire well. This is why 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)”* (KW 1205).

Who could teach charity better than the

most perfect creature, the Immaculata, whom God chose to be the Mother of Love Incarnate? St. Maximilian was aware that because of our fallen human condition we do not act always according to virtue. The best path to follow, therefore, is to turn to Our Lady, to be totally consecrated to her and let her form and lead us to become authentic witnesses of Christian living. He encourages us to keep our goal ever in mind: *“We can assert without any fear, therefore, that our sole and highest desire is to fulfill the will of the Immaculata in the strictest manner possible. To becoming every day more her property. To allow the Immaculata to take possession of our whole being. Then we shall become her worthy knights. And it will not be us, but she who acts in and through us and exerts an influence on the surrounding environment. Under the loving breath of grace, the icy barriers placed in front of the hearts of our neighbors will melt away. Whole multitudes shall follow the voice of the Immaculata and become instruments in her hand. Through them the Immaculata shall influence other souls, and so more and more forward, until the conquest of the whole world, of all souls and of each individually”* (KW 1232).

May we continue to deepen our love for the Immaculata every day. She will certainly guide us to grow in faith, to be steadfast in hope and to become channels of love.

(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.



How to Give Oneself to Her

St. Maximilian left behind a few then-unpublished writings, which offer timeless practical advice.

1. By an act of will issued once and never retracted. One may also use words, a short formula, such as the one printed on our enrollment card.

2. It is good to renew in person that act of self-donation to her, that it may become more authentic.

3. And even though we already belong to her, whenever matters that are more momentous arise, it is advisable to offer them up for her to own (even though we already belong to her). That may be done simply through the invocation: “Maria.”

Whenever we are confronted with troubles, let us offer them up for the Immaculata to own as well, through the invocation “Maria.” Let her clear them away, leave them as they are, cut them down, or add them up as she sees fit. Once a given matter has passed, if we use the invocation “Maria” again, she will purify it, repair whatever is wrong with it, and give it up to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus as her personal offering. Jesus, in turn, through the infinite merits of His Most Precious Blood, will raise that action up to infinite value. He will offer it to the Eternal Father as a gift worthy of infinite Majesty. That way, our action becomes such a voluntary offering of our hearts, of Jesus and the Im-

maculata, presented to the One and Triune God.

4. It is good also to seal an agreement with her, to the effect that, even if we were to forget to offer anything to her, our own commitment in carrying it out well may already be in itself a sign that we are doing it for her.

5. Whenever distraction diverts our attention, let a swift, but peaceful resumption of what we are doing be a sign that our action is for her.

6. Whenever pride whispers, “People are praising you,” endeavor to do even better and let it be a sign that what you are doing is for her.

The Fruits

1. If we are of the Immaculata, then all that is ours belongs to her, and Jesus accepts everything that comes from us as if it came from her, as if it belonged to her. Therefore, she cannot allow for those actions to remain imperfect, but will make them worthy of herself, that is, spotless, without the slightest stain. As a result, a soul that is consecrated to her, even if it does not explicitly address its thoughts to the Immaculata and directly offer to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus prayer, work, suffering, or any other matter, that soul will bring to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus a pleasure incomparably greater than that it would if it were not consecrated to the Immaculata.

2. Since she is the property of Jesus in the most perfect way, while Jesus is God and the property of the eternal Father, all of our offerings, even if addressed directly to the eternal Father will be, by the nature of things, made pure in the Immaculata. They will be raised up to infinite perfection in Jesus; and they will become the object of delight to the Holy Trinity.

3. That is why Satan anxiously strives to make sure that souls are diverted from union with the Immaculata, the heavenly Mother. For Satan knows that a soul that excludes the mediation of the Immaculata

ends up giving up to Jesus offerings that are so rife with flaws that they deserve more punishment than reward. What is worse, these gifts are polluted with pride, since we believe we have no need for the Mother of God.

I should underline that this does not apply to offerings given to Jesus directly, even if we forget about the Immaculata, as long as we do not exclude her, for we often neglect to mention what is already taken for granted.

That is why a soul consecrated to the Immaculata must freely follow its heart’s inspiration and approach the tabernacle, the Cross, and the Most Holy Trinity with greater resolve, for it will not be approaching them alone, but together with the heavenly Mother, the Immaculata.

Thus, we need to pray freely, both with ejaculatory prayers and with other prayers, wherever the wings of God’s love lead us, wherever the Holy Spirit blows, shattering all barriers. Lucifer refused to pay tribute to the Man-God, but his resistance was even stronger at the idea of venerating a mere human creature, albeit the purest of all, the Immaculata. ...

To bend down the world’s proud head before the feet of the Immaculata: that is the purpose of the MI; to win the whole world and every single soul over to her, as soon as possible, as soon as possible, as soon as possible. And the Kingdom of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus will rule the world through her.

It is absolutely necessary to win over the whole world to her, that the dominion of sin may end.

Maximilian Kolbe
(KW 1300-1301)





God's Response to Every Evil

by Fr. Giles Michael Gilbert, OFM Conv., MI Member

I've always loved the month of June – the month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus! In the wounded Heart of Christ, the depths of God's mercy and compassion are opened up. There, God's love is fully accessible and revealed.

For many years I have kept a small image of the Sacred Heart in my car and in my bedroom. And I encourage all of our parishioners to do the same. Appearing to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 1600s, Jesus told her: "I will bless every place where an image of My Heart is exposed and honored." This promise has always remained alive in my mind and heart... it also reminds me that the place, above all, where Jesus wants the image of His Heart to be enthroned, honored, and venerated is in my own heart, in all our hearts.

The wounded Heart of Christ teaches us what St. John says in his First Letter: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that God has loved us and sent His Son as expiation for our sins." The more we learn to adore the Heart of Christ and gaze upon His love the more we will be filled with His peace and have confidence in His grace.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is God's response to the evils of racism, injustice, and unjust discrimination and oppression. Racism, like all other sins, can ultimately only be overcome by God's grace; human skill and ingenuity, better earthly laws, are needed but they are not enough. The Sacraments of Confession and the Holy Eucharist are a type of medicine through which our hearts are healed from the effects and fruits of sin.

In this time of social unrest and anxiety, we must see and realize that Jesus is pointing to His Sacred Heart. He says to us, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest." Pope Benedict XVI, writing in 1981 as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, tells us: "In the Heart of Jesus, the center of Christianity is set before us. It expresses everything, all that is genuinely new and revolutionary in the New Covenant. This Heart calls to our heart. It invites us to step forth out of the futile attempt of self-preservation and, by joining in the task of love, by handing ourselves over to Him and with Him, to discover the fullness of love which alone is eternity and which alone sustains the world."

As we pray for the grace to overcome the evils of racism and oppression, we ask the Sacred Heart of Jesus to remove from our own hearts all that is not of Him, everything that is not worthy of His love, all that is contrary to our own human dignity.

"Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto Thine."

(Fr. Giles serves as Parochial Vicar at Holy Family Parish in Peoria, Illinois)

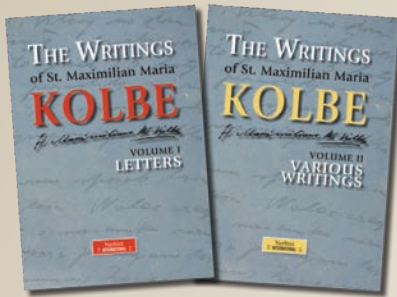


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 — Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, OFM Conv.

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 St. Maximilian Kolbe

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