



The Mission of the Immaculata

November 2016

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IN THIS ISSUE

Arise, Let Us Be on Our Way!

By John W. Galten, MI National President-USA

Dear Knights of the Immaculata,

We rejoice in the first humble e-newsletter hot off the computer, not a press as it would have been in St. Maximilian's day. He must have had the same joy in seeing in print an effective way of helping his fellow Knights grow in the meaning and depth of their individual total consecration to the Immaculata. Now, in this current publication we offer a gift to our members, a gift which will hopefully inspire, teach, create solidarity, form and inform.

What is in a title "Knights of the Immaculata"? Like St. Francis, St. Maximilian's heart was fired by the noble image of the Knight errant beginning a great quest for a lofty cause. What could be nobler than drawing all human hearts to the Most Sacred Heart through the Immaculata?!! So, as we address each other as Knights let us always remember that our quest is never-ending, adventuresome, creative and the reason for our existence.

May this title and self-description remind all of us to renew our efforts in Knightly fashion on this, the 75th anniversary of St. Maximilian's martyrdom, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the MI, and the 100th anniversary of Our Lady's appearance at Fatima. Let us examine and think on the meaning of Knighthood.

St. Francis and his spiritual son, Maximilian, had a motto—"always forward"! Arise, let us be on our way forward!



MI Pilgrimage to Poland

Testimony of a pilgrim who walked in the footsteps of St. Maximilian, St. John Paul II and St. Faustina from Warsaw, to Niepokalanow, Pabianice, Zdunska-Wola, Czestochowa, Harmeze, Krakow, Wadowice and Zakopane.



MI Testimonies

Let yourself be inspired by the testimonies of other MI members as they strive to live out their consecration!

MI Pilgrimage to Poland

By Karen Kasprzycki

I have known the stories about St. Maximilian Kolbe for a long time; however, it took a pilgrimage to Poland to come to know him.

After touring Warsaw on our first day, we traveled to Niepokalanow, the City of the Immaculate. It was in this now-serene little city that we became acquainted with much of the life of St. Maximilian.

In Harmeze-Oswiecim, we were welcomed with open arms, hearts, and fabulous cooking by the missionaries at the St. Maximilian Retreat House. In the late afternoon of Sunday, September 11 in the Retreat House chapel, ten of the pilgrims made their formal consecration to Our Mother by becoming members of the Militia of the Immaculata. Our ceremony, which Fr. Arturo Felix, OFM Conv. officiated, was solemn yet joy-filled and deeply moving. This



ceremony was one the highlights of the trip for me, in particular. St. Maximilian's profound love and dynamic relationship with Our Mother is most striking. He knew that She was with him all his life. What better way to honor his Heavenly Mother, his Queen, than by modeling himself after Her Son! Just as Jesus died for love of all of us, Maximilian died for the holy love of one family man, who was about to die a particularly gruesome death. Oh, that I may have so great a love!

During our pilgrimage to Poland, we also gained a deeper insight into the lives of

St. Faustina and St. Pope John Paul II the Great by visiting places that were part of their lives.

This was a phenomenal trip. I offer my deepest "thank you" to the MI for making special arrangements on our behalf. May God bless you and your work abundantly!

For info about MI Youth & Young Adults visit:

MIYOUTH.ORG

Check the MI official Facebook page:
[Mission of the Immaculata](#)



As per a long-standing tradition, the friars of the St. Maximilian Kolbe friary and the MI International, guardians of the cell where the Militia of the Immaculata was founded, gathered to commemorate publicly the 99th anniversary of

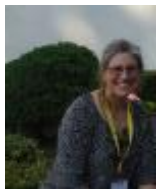
99th MI Anniversary Commemorated in Rome

by Fr. Raffaele Di Muro, OFM Conv. , MI International President

the birth the Marian association, started by the Polish martyr and six of his confreres. The Choir of the Shrine of St. Francis, from Lucera, Italy, directed masterfully by Lucia D'Apollonio, offered the participants a rich repertoire of Franciscan hymns, including one dedicated to St. Maximilian Kolbe, composed by Br. Antonio Alemanno, former director of the Choir of the Sacred Convent in Assisi.

The commemoration continued with the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, whose main celebrant was Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, prefect emeritus of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. During his homily, the Cardinal spoke of the significance of the 75th anniversary of Kolbe's martyrdom and of the MI centenary year that will culminate on October 16, 2017.

MI TESTIMONIES



Hello, my name is Julie Elkinton and I was just recently elected to the MI National Council as a Counselor. I am both honored and blessed to have such an opportunity. I live here in Bremerton, Washington, across the Puget Sound from Seattle in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. I am married to a sea captain and we have two lovely daughters, two wonderful sons-in-law, and seven (and counting) grandchildren. I work as a psychotherapist at a small practice here in Bremerton. My hobbies include beekeeping, gardening, baking cakes and perpetually learning to play the guitar.

In 2004, our family consecrated itself to Our Lady in the Militia of the Immaculata (MI). The journey to consecration began in 2003 with a visit to the site of the miraculous apparitions at the Rue du Bac in Paris. While there, with my teenage daughters, I prayed wholeheartedly to Our Lady with the intercession of St. Catherine for a "growth in holiness" for our family. As I knelt there, in front of the Saint's incorrupt body, my daughters were pacing the chapel, ready to sprint to our next destination. A Mass was beginning and I remember thinking that we were so blessed and I wanted to stay. Attending one more Mass, not in English, was the last thing my nearly heathen (at the time) daughters had any intention of sitting through; so balancing my own energy to fight yet another battle and finding my resolve weakening, we left the chapel to explore more of the city. But not before I sent a postcard to myself from the holy place. Just recently I found the



*MI Star of the Sea Village,
Bremerton, WA*

What my MI Consecration means to me...

postcard and, looking at the date, determined that Our Lady had indeed heard my rushed prayer and the following Spring brought our family under Her mantle of Grace.

After our consecration, I dutifully contacted the MI National Center to record the event and just happened to inquire and receive a starter packet for beginning an MI Village. I looked through the materials and thought it would be wonderful to start such a group, but there was little interest in the circles I traveled in at the time and our parish suggested I wait. And wait I did, every once in a while pondering how lovely it would be to have such a group in which to pray to Our Lady. Then in 2012 a friend asked me to join a group of women reading/praying the 33 Days to Morning Glory with Fr. Michael Gaitley.

I agreed and approximately 15 of us made/renewed our consecrations on December 8. Early that morning, this same friend suggested we meet at a local coffee shop after the consecration. I read her email and offered that we gather at my home instead which would be a bit easier for socializing. They all agreed. While the ladies chatted and mingled, the Holy Spirit enlightened

my mind with the idea, "What about asking if they would like to become an MI village?" Well, I dug out the materials I had received eight years before and posed the question: a unanimous "yes" was received. We became a village and took the name "Star of the Sea" after one of Our Lady's many titles. The village has allowed us to continue our consecrations with monthly formation material that inspires and challenges us to live our faith daily. For me personally, consecration is a commitment and responsibility. I have chosen to say "yes" to Our Lady and her challenge to be not just a follower of Her Son Jesus as a Christian, but one of His daughters by adoption with Her example of graceful holiness.

As a new member of the National Council, I hope to continue to learn more about the MI, the life and vision of St. Maximilian, and what other villages and groups are doing to live their consecration more fully.

I am so excited to see and hear what Our Lady has in store for our new leadership. Like any good mother, she loves us just as we are, but encourages us to grow ever closer in our relationship to Her Son.

St. Maximilian's Vision for the MI

Part One

On July 23, 1919, 25-year-old Fr. Maximilian Kolbe returned to Poland after the completion of his studies in Rome. A couple of months later he began promoting the MI among his fellow Franciscan friars, university students, lay people and clergy. The following is Part One of one of his most powerful talks, given on November 15, 1919 (cf. KW 1248). In a nutshell he offers his whole compelling and passionate vision for the MI. Let us be inspired by his timeless and prophetic words!

I. The Purpose of the MI

The nature of each thing is shaped according to the *purpose* for which it exists. So if we wish to learn about the nature of the MI we need to examine its purpose. Also, each thing has a dual purpose: an ultimate one and an immediate one. The ultimate purpose of all creation is the external glory of God. Intelligent creatures offer such glory in a perfect fashion, because they are not merely an image of the divine perfections: they also know and recognize such image. Hence the homage, adoration, thanksgiving, and love of the creature toward the Creator.

We must love God without limits, because He loved us without limits and showed such love by coming down to this earth in order to lift, enlighten, strengthen and redeem the guilty. He did so even by way of a most humiliating death in the midst of most horrible torments, staying here with us until the end of time, even though He had been abandoned and insulted by ungrateful people; ultimately giving Himself up to us as nourishment, to make us divine through His own divinity. However, since we are limited creatures, we are unable to give infinite glory to God.

Let us at least give Him as much as we can. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of the MI is precisely the *glory of God*, and not only a greater glory, but the *greatest possible glory*.

Its immediate purpose, however, is the one toward which we strive directly and which serves as a means to achieve our ultimate goal. The manifestation of God's perfections is the end of all creation. The purpose of man, instead, is to know, to acknowledge, and to freely perfect God's image within himself, by responding to divine graces and being thereby joined more and more closely with God through love, thus, we may say, becoming divinized.

The MI has as its immediate concern for the conversion of all non-Catholics, especially of the Freemasons who, blinded by fanaticism, raise their wicked hands

The only reason for the existence and activity of the MI is love, a love without limits for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

even against their most gracious Father. All this the MI does under the protection and through the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate.

Under her protection, that is, as instruments in her immaculate hands, and *through her mediation*, that is, using the means that she puts at our disposal and praying that she may obtain mercy for us.

II. The Nature of the MI

That is our purpose, in line with which our whole organization is to be modeled. Philosophy tells us that the nature of all things consists of matter and form joined together.

In the MI, as in any other association, matter consists of members, who, without exception, may be all those who wish to achieve the purpose set

out above: young and old, religious, priests and laymen, men and women, scientists and the illiterate, in a word, all those who want to give God the greatest possible glory, with no limits, through the Immaculata.

The form, however, that is to say what unites the members as they strive to achieve the aim, that is, the essence of an association, in the MI consists in the total and unlimited giving of the self to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary Immaculate, that she may deign to fulfill in us and through us what was written of her: "She will crush your head" (Gn 3:15) and "You alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world" (Office of the B.V.M.). In a word, so that she may deign to sanctify us and, through us, unite other people to God with the closest possible love.

Moreover, the outward sign of that consecration is the Miraculous Medal, for it was handed to us by her; [the wearing of the medal] is an integral part of the MI. Of course, neither the actual spiritual practice of the above gift of self nor wearing the Miraculous Medal actually binds anyone under pain of sin, even the smallest sin.

The only reason for the existence and activity of the MI is love, a love without limits for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, in order to offer up to Him as many souls as possible and unite them to Him as closely as possible.

The room where the MI was founded....



The MI & the Sacredness of Life

by Fr. James Mc Curry, OFMConv.

Human life derives its sacredness primarily from the fact that God is alive and is the source and principle of life in His creatures, who mirror the living God because they are made in His image and likeness. If, for example, we read Ps. 42:3, Ps. 84:30, Deut 6:21, Jos 3:10, 1 Sam 19:6, we discover that life is described as a sacred gift in which the mystery of the living God is mirrored. The vitality of life does not depend upon consciousness or unconsciousness, nor upon accomplishment or non-accomplishment, nor upon the quality of life. It depends upon the personal relationship between creature and Creator. Our Lady, by her vital bond to God, helps us understand that the value of life derives from every person being related to the Holy Trinity.

The Militia of the Immaculata invites people to see and participate in Mary's dignity. Her dignity is that of an individual who relates to God, and finds a spiritual vitality through that relationship. In the light of Mary's dignified relationship to God, all of us can recognize that we too are the beneficiaries of God's gifts of life and grace, and that our job is to develop those gifts. Through this Marian perspective we recognize that life is ultimately God's property, not ours. In the MI, through our total consecration to the Immaculata, we give ourselves to her as her property and possession. Mary recognized from the very beginning that ultimately she was not her own person, that she was the handmaid of the Lord. When we unite with her through

consecration we take a stance where she gives us to God as his property and possession. Belonging to Mary breeds our belonging to God and reveals our conviction and proclamation to the world that God has sovereign rights over all human beings.

What does this mean for the pro-life battle? Our consecration to Mary, following the example of St. Maximilian, enables us to belong to Mary totally, so that the totality of our life can, through her, belong wholly to God. Keep in mind how wholly she herself belongs to God.

Therefore, when a baby is killed in the womb of his mother, or when a husband has his wife hooked up to some death machine, the ultimate crime is not primarily a violation of their right to life. The ultimate violation is against God's rights over all human life. The great sin of abortionists and euthanasionists is a violation of the absolute, sovereign rights of God over life.

Our Lady's presence in the pro-life movement, highlighted in the MI, unveils the reality clearly. The pro-life movement will not have success until we all see that the ultimate rights under attack are the rights of God, and that from God's sovereignty over life derives the right to life of the unborn, the poor, and the destitute and the terminally ill. In the light of and in relationship with the Immaculata, we can see all the more clearly the absolute choice that God has already made for life unto eternity for each of us. Accordingly we realize that our job is simply to align our daily choices with God's ultimate choice for life.

Another implication of Mary's place in the pro-life movement touches upon the Eucharist: the bread of

life for the world. *The MI is a pro-life movement in practice because it leads people to the Holy Eucharist.*

Life is intended by God to walk the way of the two crowns from the womb to the tomb. It is not an easy journey, but we are nourished on the way by the Eucharistic "food for the journey." If we journey with, through, and in the Immaculata, she enables us to experience with her own profound faith how stabilizing an anchor the Eucharist is for us wayfarers. She unites us to Our Eucharistic Lord through adoration and participation in the Eucharistic life of the Church. *Our pro-life walk, as propagated by the MI, is basically the walk of Christian perfection.* It is not enough simply for us to take a walk alone, however. St. Maximilian founded the MI for the conversion and growth in holiness of all persons. Therefore, we must become engaged with the Immaculata in helping as many others as possible to take this walk. With Mary we help others to see the wondrous beauty of walking in an ever-growing relationship with God, the Trinity of Love. St. Maximilian Kolbe established the MI to be an evangelization movement that would, by making Mary visible, make God's plan for the life of the world visible and fruitful. God's pro-life plan is achievable. By consecrating ourselves to Mary and becoming her instruments, we cooperate with God Who, through Mary, is accomplishing his purpose for the life and love of the world. Our challenge is to be part of that work. *The MI is striving to respond to this pro-life challenge.*

Excerpts from article published in *Spes Nostra* Magazine, Vol. 3, 11/1993. Reprinted with permission of the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata, West Covina, CA.

Reflection on November MI Intention

O Immaculata please intercede that in times of darkness and uncertainty we may be able to invoke God's merciful love.

St. Maximilian experiences times of great trial and obscurity that bring about a great purification, typical of a lived mysticism. This is verified above all in the double recovery of Father Kolbe from consumption at Zakopane (August 11, 1920-April 29, 1921; September 18, 1926 - April 13, 1927). He is forced to live away from the friary to recover: a young and promising priest, he experiences a very difficult trial. He has consecrated himself to the Immaculata, has offered his availability to evangelize, but must not do anything. He welcomes with patience this suffering, offering it with love to God.

This is a fundamental moment for Maximilian. After this necessary hidden time, an extraordinary apostolate is developed that has made the Polish saint popular. He lives the cross with trusting abandon to the divine will proposing, among other things, the greatest glory to God and the salvation of souls, thanks to the offering of his physical and spiritual pain. The recoveries at Zakopane, besides the doubts of his overcoming them, are a reason for a spiritual and healthy "detachment" from his apostolate, developing above all as journalist and from the religious community. It is a painful exile that represents a purification filled with great

gifts from God, because it is the prelude to his powerful and untiring apostolate.

Of great importance is the following excerpt: "Troubles here are many, even on the part of priests (as, indeed, was the case in Poland). The Bishop of Tokyo was so reproachful to me about *Kishi* that I realized bias against us in the capital must be strong. At times, he even contradicted himself. He was obviously advancing arguments presented to him by others. But he was disarmed when faced with cases of conversion." (KW 336).



In this letter, St. Maximilian's suffering for the hardships in Japan is visible, but also there is a notable spirit of trust in God, in addition to his missionary zeal, with which he overcomes the difficulties and spurs conversions. Father Kolbe's words indicate a great ability of abandonment to God's providence and Mary's maternal intervention. The practice of asceticism is decisive, as well as prayer for the good outcome of his apostolic activity. In the time of his presence in Japan, the martyr faces very

delicate moments where he is called to assume much patience and humility regarding the confreres that do not share his position or are in vocational crisis.

The suffering is great, but also noteworthy is the confidence in the Lord and in the Immaculata. His ascetical life and trust are important for a fruitful and well-rooted mission. He reveals himself a true Friar Minor and penitent as he places every affair in the hands of the Most High, considering himself nothing and accepting adversities. This testimony renders the apostolate more precious and efficacious. It is characterized by the cross. Even in the most painful circumstances, Father Kolbe doesn't cease to work for his community and to want to share with the brothers the work of the mission.

Prayer, especially the rosary, gives him strength and perseverance from the Lord even in the dark and fatigue of certain situations: "In sorrowful hearts, a balsam of comfort descends. In desperate souls once again shines a ray of hope. The poor, the oppressed, those bent under the burden of worry, tribulations and crosses feel ever more that they are not orphans; they have a Mother who understands their pains, sympathizes, consoles and helps.

"They feel they have to suffer a little longer, but then a reward, a reward that is eternal and infinite will follow. They realize that it is even worth suffering in this short life, in order to wipe out the sins committed and give proof of their love to God. They understand that suffering purifies the soul like fire

to gold, because the soul is detached from passing illusions the world calls happiness, and rises higher and higher, infinitely higher and higher, to the source of all happiness, God. They realize that the soul may only find rest in Him while everything else is far too little....” (KW 1102)

For reflection

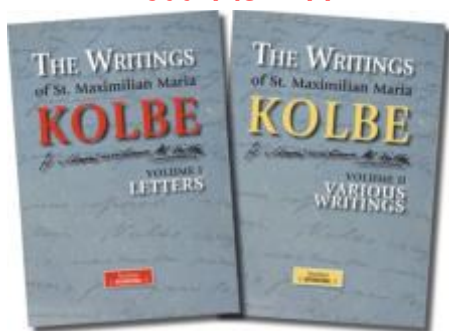
Meditate on the following excerpt from St. Maximilian’s writings:

“Try to turn to her, like a child to his beloved and most tender Mother, even if by just calling her with her holy name, ‘Mary,’ with your lips or with your heart, in the difficulties of life, when you are in darkness and in your spiritual weaknesses, and you alone will suffice to convince yourself how much Mary is powerful and who her Son, Jesus Christ, is.” (KW 1181)

(Translation by Ann O’Donnell, FKMI)

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Questions & Answers about the MI

Q. *When was the Militia of the Immaculata (MI) established?*

A. The MI was founded on October 16, 1917, in Rome.

Q. *When was the MI first approved by the Church?*

A. The MI was erected as a Pious Union on January 2, 1922, by the Vicariate of Rome. On April 23, 1927, Pope Pius XI raised the MI to a Primary Pious Union.

Q. *What is the current canonical status of the MI?*

A. In response to the petition presented on behalf of the MI by the Minister General of the Order of the Franciscan Conventual Friars, and in consideration of the universality of the MI membership and mission, on October 16, 1997, the Pontifical Council for the Laity erected the MI as an *International Public Association of the Faithful*. The MI is open to Catholics of all walks of life: laity, clerics and consecrated persons, and is governed according to the norms of Canon Law, the directives of the Catholic Church and MI General Statutes.

Q. *When were the current General Statutes approved?*

A. The current MI General Statutes were approved on March 25, 2015, by the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Q. *Who is the current MI International President and where is the MI International Center located?*

A. The MI International President and Spiritual Assistant is Fr. Raffaele Di Muro, OFM Conv. The MI International Center is located at the Convento San Massimiliano Kolbe, Via San Teodoro 42, Rome.

MI NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



MI Elective Assembly in Poland

On October 14-16, 2016, at Niepokalanow, Fr. Raffaele Di Muro, MI International President, presided over the MI National elective Assembly, which opened with a series of talks offered by professors of the Mariological center *Kolbianum*. The re-elected National President, Fr. Stanislaw Pietka, gathered with the Council to discuss the 100th anniversary events. Our prayers go with you!



MI Elective Assembly in Brazil

Next January 2017, the first MI National Elective Assembly will be celebrated in Brazil. Let us pray for our fellow knights of the Immaculata. The MI in Brazil is at the forefront in the work of evangelization through the media.



Visit from the Philippines

On October 8, 2016, Fr. Francis Mateo, Custos of the OFM Conv. in the Philippines, and the secretary, Fr. Emmanuel Giva, visited the MI International Center in Rome, located in Via San Teodoro, where the MI was founded in 1917. He met with the International President to plan the future MI formative activity in his country. Best wishes to the MI in the Philippines!

Prayer for the MI Centenary Year

Into Your Hands, Immaculate Virgin!

May you be praised, Immaculate Virgin! You have been the light and soul of the MI during the first one hundred years of its life. In order to follow Christ faithfully, like St. Maximilian, we have contemplated your splendid virtues.

In you we have found the strength to love and have brought the charity of your Son everywhere. You still are our consolation in the trials of our lives. You are our light in our work of evangelization. You are our strength in our journey of faith, communion with the Lord and discipleship.

Into your hands we place again today the journey of the MI present throughout the world, so that it may bring to all people the love of the Lord and the beauty of your compassionate and maternal presence.

May our MI apostolate radiate to our brothers and sisters the mercy of God reflected also in your tender care toward each person.

We shall let ourselves be led by you, most sweet Mother, certain that with your protection we will live according to God's will. May the MI centenary year spur us on to be valiant apostles of God's Kingdom and to experience your support in our ecclesial mission. O Immaculata, we let ourselves be led by you! Amen.



Check regularly the MI website – MissionImmaculata.com – for updates about the MI Centenary Year. Find reflections, the lyrics and music of the theme songs, special events and more!

The Mission of the Immaculata

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There are many varied tasks that you and other MI members can help with as we get the MI relaunched throughout the US.

- Donate online at MissionImmaculata.com
- Spend time in prayer that the MI may generously and strategically fulfill its mission.
- Use your talents to promote total consecration to the Immaculata through the MI everywhere!