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**MI MONTHLY FORMATION (4)**  
*In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality*



**APRIL 2007 PRAYER INTENTION:**

That the power of Christ's Resurrection may renew us spiritually to share it with all whom we meet daily.

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*Dear Friends and MI Members,*

We have entered into Holy Week, that time when the liturgy calls us to immerse ourselves in the passion, death and resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Poland Holy Week is very special. On Palm Sunday the children carry what symbolizes the palm (a long stick decorated with evergreens, paper flowers, streamers and wildflowers), since the palm doesn't grow there. The people and the priests process with the palms from a roadside shrine in the villages to the churches. For Holy Thursday there are elaborate altars depicting Christ in the prison. The Eucharist is hidden behind these altars. After the Passion on Good Friday until the Easter Vigil Mass the Polish people make pilgrimages to the neighboring churches to pray before the elaborate sepulchers and the figure of Christ in the tomb. Some parishes actually have real guards to guard the body of Christ. Your life is taken up by the Triduum.

Some of us seem to live in church during this week. Isn't it wonderful! One of my catechetical students upon learning how often the missionaries were in church during the Easter Triduum said, "Why don't you just move your beds in the church?" We do not consider it an excessive display of devotion. We are moved by the Liturgy and love for Our Lord to increase our time with him during his time of agony and death. How appropriate then that our reflection this month calls us to the contemplation and action in the life of Our Lord.

Who was Jesus? In the readings of Lent we hear Christ declaring His Sonship with the Father: "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30). "The Father is in me and I am in the Father" (Jn 10:38). It is for this proclamation that he is crucified.

We as Catholics are called to believe in Christ as the Divine Son of the Father, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity who took on flesh, the Incarnation. He is our Lord and Redeemer. (Cf CCC #423-424) Therefore, in a very simplistic way we know that everything He was, said, and did was perfect/divine. He was in constant and in perfect union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. "...for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me" (Jn 8:42). Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "The fact that he is Son means, above all, that he prays. That in the ground of his being, whether he works among men or takes his rest, he is always open to the living God, always has his place in him, always regards his existence as an exchange with him and so always lives from this innermost depth... The Son does not simply design his own existence; he receives it in a most profound dialogue with God."

His public ministry was interspersed with definite times of retreat from the crowds and even from the apostles for a more privileged time of prayer with the Father: "Rising early the next morning, he went off to a lonely place in the desert: there he was absorbed in prayer." (Mk 1:35) Under the personal reflections I propose to you to look up the many quotations regarding Jesus' private prayer.

He teaches us the great need to have such moments in our lives, especially before or during important decisions or events. He did such at his baptism and after when he went into the desert for forty days, before calling the twelve apostles, during his active ministry, before His passion... As already quoted from Pope Benedict, Christ receives everything in a profound dialogue with God. In all he is doing he is receiving from the Father.

One of the greatest moments for me when I worked directly for the formation of youth, was when they began to listen to the movements of the Holy Spirit within. They began to listen to the voice of conscience that had received good solid teachings. They began to base their decisions upon that inner voice, not the voice of the world, nor their peers. They were experimenting what it meant to be like Christ whose actions mirrored the will of the Father. Their actions began to be based on their contemplation, an open dialogue with God.

Christ is the perfect symbiosis of contemplation and action. Number 531 in the Catholic Catechism states: "During the greater part of his life Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labor." His sleeping, eating, working, resting, prayer, relationships were all holy. We read in the Catechism, "The obedience of Christ in the daily routine of his hidden life was already inaugurating his work of restoring what the disobedience of Adam had destroyed" (Cf Rom 5:19). How fantastic to think that EVERYTHING that Christ did was salvific, not only His passion and death and resurrection. His person is our salvation!

A most Blessed Easter to each one of you and your loved ones. Christ is Risen! He has conquered sin and death! ALLELUIA!

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**PERSONAL REFLECTION AND READING:**

- Bible: Look up the following quotes in which Jesus was in prayer: Mt 14:23-24; Mk 1:35; 6:46; Lk 5:15-16; 6:1; 3:21-22; 9:28-29; 11:1; 22:31-32
- CCC Article 2 on Christian Prayer: #2598-2606
- Symbiosis: Contemplation and Action: p. 24-25.
- Spend time recalling those very important moments of prayer in your life and how they formed your decisions and actions.
- Holy Thursday recalls the gift of the priesthood. Like Our Lady may we surround the priests we know with love and respect. Offer the prayer daily for their intentions.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- APRIL -

Holy Week

**1 Palm Sunday**

*4 MI Spanish Retreat in West Covina, CA*

**5 Holy Thursday (Easter Triduum)**

**6 Good Friday**

**7 Holy Saturday – Day of Mary's faith**

**8 Easter Sunday**

**9-14 Octave of Easter**

**15 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday**

**22 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**25 St. Mark (Feast)**

**28 St. Louis Mary de Montfort**

**29 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

*27-29 MI Couples Retreat in Oceanside, CA*

**QUOTE:**

“In imitation of the Son of God, the God-Man, the children of God are to work away at their salvation, delineating more clearly the character of His countenance upon their hearts, striving to be perfect and holy. The more one attempts to make the image of Christ shine forth in one’s life, the more one approaches Divinity. It is the mystical marriage of the soul with Christ that the likeness and action of the divine life may be affirmed.

*--St. Maximilian Kolbe*

**A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS**

Compassionate and loving Father, we pray for our priests. Filled with your compassion and love, may they minister to your Church, mindful of your Son’s example and the example of all your saints, especially St. Maximilian Kolbe.

May they, like Fr. Kolbe, preach your Gospel with courage and boldness for the world hungry to hear your Word.

May they, like your Son, be willing to be “signs of contradiction” to the world, realizing that this will require much discipline and sacrifice, and possibly even their lives.

When asked who they are and what they do, may they respond simply, “I am a priest,” and be filled with gratitude for the gift of their vocation.

Most of all, heavenly Father, may they be examples to the world of your love and mercy, and mirror to their people as St. Maximilian Kolbe did, that indeed, “Love alone creates.”

We ask that you bestow the necessary graces upon those priests who have left their ministry and abandoned their vocation, especially (name), so that, if it be your will, they may return to serve you and the Church. Help them to seek your mercy and forgiveness so they may once again become instruments of reconciliation and peace.

May your Mother, Mary Immaculate, always be with our priests to comfort and guide them with her motherly embrace.

We ask this through and in your Son’s name, Jesus Christ. Amen.