



## MI MONTHLY FORMATION (8)

*In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality*

### **AUGUST 2006 PRAYER INTENTION:**

**That, following St. Maximilian Kolbe, we become promoters of the culture of self-giving which flows from the heart of God and from your maternal heart.**

Dear Friends,

Jesus left us his commandment to love one another as he loved us specifying that "greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn 15: 13). A man very dear to us was enabled to carry out absolutely literally these words of the Redeemer: his name is St. Maximilian Kolbe. In this month we celebrate his feast day remembering his martyrdom on August 14, 1941, when his remains were burned and his ashes scattered in the wind. After two weeks in the starvation bunker Kolbe's impatient and brutal captors ended his life by a fatal injection. Thus, this year we celebrate the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event which has brought many blessings to the Church, to our MI movement and to the whole world. Instead of the usual formation material, this time I offer you a simple prayer hand-out that you can use and adapt as a Holy Hour or as a prayer time with your fellow MIs and parishioners in preparation for or on St. Maximilian's feast day.

John Paul II canonized Maximilian Kolbe a saint and "martyr of love" in 1982. May his luminous example of devotion to Christ and his Blessed Mother stir up new and courageous apostolic commitment in every "Knight" of the Immaculata, for the glory of God and the good of many people.

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And now...

A Special Farewell

As you may know, people totally consecrated to God through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, especially members of missionary Institutes, have put their lives at total disposal of God's kingdom so that He may dispose of them according to His holy will. After the General Assembly of our

Institute, held last April in Bologna, Italy, we missionaries were all waiting for our new assignments. In a spirit of faith and obedience in God's wisdom and bounty, I have accepted and embraced my new assignment as directress of the community of our motherhouse in Bologna to which belong thirty missionaries and seven members in formation. I will also be the delegate of the Volunteers of that region and the national coordinators of the FKVI.

It is painful for me to leave this country and mission now that I have finally mastered the language and I have begun working with many good people more confidently and fruitfully. But I know that my little "yes" placed in Our Lady's "Yes" will bring many more graces to you than my presence and work have.

My dear friends, the assignment and the task that have been entrusted to me are really beyond my abilities, but I trust in God more than in myself, and I also hope for your prayers. Please, continue to keep me and our FKMI communities in your prayers and hearts. I will do the same for each one of you. Many people I have met in these six years in the USA have affected my life and enabled me to grow in many ways. I am particularly grateful to them and especially to you, for the journey we have shared together in the spirituality of St. Maximilian Kolbe. With your cooperation, may Our Lady continue her maternal mission of conversion and sanctification of all so that the Kingdom of God may spread throughout the world. Then, the joy of seeing God's grace transforming people and situations will be your best reward.

I wish you well and the best achievements in holiness and in your apostolate.

With love in Mary's Heart

**Rossella Bignami**

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## ABIDE IN ME

**L.** We wish to spend this time of prayer and adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, Jesus present among us, pleading for the gift of a greater LOVE. In the Eucharist Jesus manifests all his power, his humanity and his will to love us till the end. In fact, in the the Eucharist, as in the life and death of the martyrs, love shows its faithfulness to the end and its power to overcome evil and death.

*Song for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

### **R1. *Abide in my love.***

The Lord Jesus loves us with total and everlasting love, which does not diminish nor betray.

### **R2. *Abide in my love.***

This is Jesus' invitation to his disciples of all ages and eras. One cannot call himself a Christian if he doesn't abide in Christ, if he doesn't taste and relish the happiness of his love.

### **R1. *Abide in my love.***

This is not a temporary, passing refuge like assembling a shelter for the night. It is rather an aura of light and joy which enwraps and permeates one's entire life.

### **R2. *From the First Letter of St. John* (4: 7-11)**

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another.

**L.** After each prayer, we will sing the refrain:

***Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas***

***Deus ibi est*** (*Where there is charity and love, Where there is charity there is God*).

**R1.** O Lord God, you have known everything from eternity and you created everything out of love, stir in us the desire to praise you in all creation and in every creature.

***Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas  
Deus ibi est***

**R2.** O Lord God, you who have made every baptized person partake in your priesthood and mission, give us an untiring desire to be faithful and eager in the mission of evangelizing people, especially through the testimony of our mutual love.

***Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas  
Deus ibi est***

**R1.** O Lord God, merciful and compassionate toward the poor, the outcast and the marginalized, you who have loved all without discrimination but have shown a preference for the poor and suffering, enable us to bring your love especially to those who are in most need.

***Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas  
Deus ibi est.***

**R2.** O Lord God, you who enable the martyrs to give up their lives for your sake and for the sake of their brothers and sisters, help us to imitate St. Maximilian Kolbe in his love for the Immaculata and in his heroic love serving others with the truth of the Gospel and the fruit of the Spirit.

***Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas  
Deus ibi est.***

*Spontaneous prayers may be added  
Silence and personal adoration*

**R1. *From the Encyclical Deus Caritas Est***  
*(God Is Love) of Benedict XVI, #1*

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 Jn 4:16). These words from the First Letter of John express with remarkable clarity the heart of the Christian faith: the Christian image of God and

the resulting image of mankind and its destiny. In the same verse, Saint John also offers a kind of summary of the Christian life: “We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.” *We have come to believe in God’s love*: in these words the Christian can express the fundamental decision of his life. Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction.

**R2. From St. Maximilian Kolbe’s Writings**

“Love lives on, nourishes itself on sacrifice. Let us thank the Immaculata for interior peace, for ecstasy of love. Still, we should remember that even though these things are good and beautiful, they are absolutely not the essence of love, and that love, in fact, perfect love, can exist even without them. The peak of love is the state in which Jesus happened to find himself on the cross when he cried: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ (Mt 27: 46).

There is no love without sacrifice. And this includes sacrificing our senses, especially our eyes, our taste, our hearing, and so on. But, above all, sacrificing our reason and our will in holy obedience” (SK 503).

**R1.** “‘God is love’ (1Jn 4:16), and since every effect is similar to its cause, consequently, every creature lives on love... In fact, love is the main spur and the motor of every healthy activity. When people reach maturity, they look for someone to whom they can give their heart, in order to form their own family unit. This love was created by God and has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament. But God calls some souls to a love that is even higher. These souls do not want to have a divided heart, so they choose, as their only love, the commitment to love God alone, and they consecrate themselves totally in an official way to him with their religious profession: with the vow of poverty they offer him all they possess or all they could receive in the future as their property; with the vow of chastity they sacrifice for God’s sake the possibility of having their own family life; and finally, with the vow of obedience they give up what they treasure most: their own will, their intellect and their entire soul. In order to comply

faithfully with these three vows, these individuals join a religious institution, where the communal life helps them to detach themselves from every material thing and preserves them from the world’s attractions. Moreover, their Constitutions and rules, and the advice of their superiors help them to know the will of God in every daily event” (SK 908).

*Time for personal reflection or group sharing*

**L.** In union of hearts and will and in communion with the whole Church, we now pray to the Father as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father....**

**L.** *Let us pray.* May God the Father, who sent his Son into the world, enable us to testify with our life a generous and humble love, to embrace the cross and thus to be reborn in the new and eternal life. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father, You inflamed your priest and martyr, Saint Maximilian Kolbe, with love for the Immaculate Virgin and filled him with zeal for souls and love of neighbor. Through his prayers grant that we may work unreservedly for your glory in the service of men and thereby become like Christ your Son until death. **Amen.** May God bless us, protect us from every evil and bring us to eternal life. **Amen.**

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<b>Dates to Remember</b>	
<b>5</b>	<i>Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome</i>
<b>6</b>	<b>THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD</b>
<b>11</b>	<i>St. Clare of Assisi</i>
<b>14</b>	<b>ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE</b> , martyr of love. Solemnity and Plenary Indulgence for MIs
<b>15</b>	<b>ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</b> , Solemnity
<b>22</b>	<b>THE QUEENSHIP OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY</b>
<b>26</b>	<i>Our Lady of Czstochowa</i>
<b>29</b>	<i>Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist</i>