

MI MONTHLY FORMATION (1)
In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality

JANUARY 2006 PRAYER INTENTION:
That, with you, we discover our identity in the image and likeness
of the Trinity



Dear Friends,

May the peace and grace of God be with you always! In this month let us continue the path taken by the Magi thousands of years ago and meet, as they did, **the Messiah of all nations**. The Magi set out boldly along unknown paths on a long, and by no means easy, journey. They did not hesitate to leave everything behind in order to follow the star that they had seen in the East (cf. Mt 2:2). *“And the star... went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was”* (Mt 2:9).

To Learn To Read the Signs

In the message for the World Youth Day 2005, Pope John Paul II commenting this passage observed: “The Magi reached Bethlehem because they had obediently allowed themselves to be guided by the star. Indeed, *‘When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy’* (Mt 2:10). It is important, my dear friends, to learn to observe the signs with which God is calling us and guiding us. When we are conscious of being led by Him, our heart experiences authentic and deep joy as well as a powerful desire to meet Him and a persevering strength to follow Him obediently.”

The Sign of God's Love for Us

“And *‘going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother’* (Mt 2:11). There is nothing extraordinary about this at first sight. Yet that Child was different from any other: He is the only Son of God, yet He emptied Himself of His glory (cf. Phil 2:7) and came to earth to die on the Cross. He came down among us and became poor in order to reveal to us His divine glory, which we shall contemplate fully in heaven, our blessed home. Who could have invented a greater sign of love? We are left in awe before the mystery of a God who lowered himself to take on our human condition, to the point of giving His life for us on the Cross (cf. Phil 2:6-8). In His poverty, - as Saint Paul reminds us - *‘though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich’* (2 Cor 8:9), and came to offer salvation to sinners. How can we give thanks to God for such magnanimous goodness?” (Message for the WYD 2005, #2). This is a good question we not only need to ponder upon but also to answer to through consequent deeds, isn't it?

Worshipping God While Honoring His Mother

“Going into the house [the Magi] saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him” (Mt 2: 11). The Magi found Jesus “with Mary his mother” and they “worshipped him.” They worshipped ONLY Jesus but, at the same time, in bowing down in adoration before him they must necessarily have bowed with reverence in the direction of the Virgin Mother who was holding Baby Jesus out to them and to the world. This detail teaches us that worship of Jesus is inseparable from deep reverence for the Mother by whose obedient faith he has come into the world and made himself available for our adoration. It was **Mary's faith** that has made possible for us to adore God incarnate! We worship Jesus alone and, through him, the Father. But, in so doing, we render a homage of deep gratitude and love to Mary who first believed and, through her faith, made possible for us to find Jesus, our Savior, **the Messiah of all nations**. When the Lord comes, will he find the same quality of faith on earth?

Dear friends, let this question challenge us and help us grow even more in our specific Kolbean and Marian charism so that we may be bearers of Christ's peace in our milieu.

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“Leading all men to God through the Immaculata” (St. Maximilian Kolbe)

Father Kolbe lived a vital relationship with Mary in a unique way, understood as a ‘transformation in Her,’ a ‘becoming Her’ (SK 508) in order to reach a more perfect union with Christ.

This year we will continue our on going formation as MIers by deepening the meaning of our consecration to the Immaculata and by spelling out the way that leads us to this “becoming her.” Every month, through different contributions, I wish to offer you some stimulus as means of nurturing your spirit and inspiring your apostolic commitment. I also hope that these monthly formation guidelines may become more interactive through your contribution. Then, I expect you to send me your experiences, reflections, and suggestions regarding the topic that we will develop each month. In this way, the guidelines will better serve the growth of the whole Movement.

Let Us Be Shaped Anew

“‘*The Word became flesh*’ (Jn 1: 14) as fruit of the love of God and the Immaculata,” writes St. Maximilian Kolbe, and it continues to be so even for us today because Christ is “the firstborn, the God-Man, and souls aren’t reborn in Christ in any other way, but only through the love of God for the Immaculata and in the Immaculata.”(SK 1295)

If we want to become true sons and daughters of God, let us plunge ourselves into this Love and let God shape us according to his Son’s image. Thus, by reproducing the features of the God-Man, true Son of God and true Son of Mary, we will tend to and achieve true holiness, that is, our true happiness.

Consecration To the Immaculata: the Highway To Become True Disciples of Jesus

Mary calls us to conversion and helps us to raise the level of our spiritual life to the peak of holiness (cf. SK 1220). As she did at Cana, she continues to invite us to put our trust in Jesus and to do whatever he tells us (cf. Jn 2: 5). In listening to her maternal invitation, we become disciples of Jesus and take our place in God’s salvific plan, giving our contributions to the growth of the civilization of love, peace and justice. We make ours the same mission of the Immaculata and of the Church, which consists in working for the conversion of hearts and for the reconciliation of people with God and with one another.

The encounter with Christ changes a person’s life, spurs him to a profound conversion of mind and heart, and establishes a communion of life that becomes discipleship. Therefore, we strive to draw everyone closer to the Immaculata, so that she can give him Jesus, the Redeemer of the world.

How Do We Live Our Consecration to Mary?

By	Which means	Which entails & Affects
Imitating Mary	Looking at Her as our model	Our daily life
Invoking Mary	Calling upon Her as the Mediatrix of all graces	Our prayer & spiritual life
Uniting ourselves with Mary	“Becoming Her”	Our actions & deeds

St. Maximilian continually invites us to *come closer to her, to become like her, to permit her to reign over our hearts and whole being, that she may live and act in us and through us, that she may love God with our hearts and we belong to her unreservedly: this is our ideal.*

This closeness that consecration raises in the soul enables us to share in her attitudes, that is:

- In her interior life
- In her obedience of faith to God’s will
- In her ardent, heroic charity
- In her capacity of suffering out of love.

During this year we will reflect upon each one of these “pillars” or centerpieces to which the MI General Statutes refer in the articles regarding “Spirituality and Formation.”

Resources

John Paul II, *Message for the 20th WYD*, at www.vatican.va/Holy_Father/John_Paul_II/messages/youth

Benedict XVI, *Message for the XXXIX World Day of Peace 2006*, at www.vatican.va/Holy_Father/Benedict_xvi/messages/peace

For the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
www.vatican.va

Then, on “search on site” type “Christian Unity;” go to the Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity and click on “Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.” You will find abundant material on this year’s theme: *Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am here among them (Mt 18: 20)*.

SK, *Scriviti Kolbe (Fr. Kolbe’s writings)*, in *Stronger than Hatred*, New City Press, New York, 1991.

Or in : *The Kolbe Reader*, Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL, 1987. Or in: *Maria Was His Middle Name*, The Benziger Sisters Publishers, Altadena, CA, 1977.

MI General Statutes
www.consecration.com

Fr. Luigi Faccenda, *One More Gift*, Immaculata Press

From the Writings of Fr. Luigi Faccenda, OFMConv. *

THE “TRANSFORMATION” IN MARY

“Maximilian Kolbe conceived the consecration to the Immaculata as a ‘transformation in Her,’ as ‘becoming Her’ (cf. SK 556; 991Q). This fundamental idea of the martyr of Auschwitz maintains all of its genuineness. Concretely speaking, it means to express in our life the same life as Mary, who was a perfect follower of Christ and a model for the Church and every Christian. ‘Being Mary’ conveys a Marian spirituality profoundly ecclesial, which draws its contents from the four attitudes of the Virgin Mary described by Pope Paul VI in the *Marialis Cultus*: Mary is the Virgin in listening, the Virgin in prayer, the Virgin Mother and the Virgin offering (MC, 17-21). How can we better express the desire to imitate and to assimilate Her other than by living dynamically our consecration, that is, by experiencing these four attitudes that can transform us in Her?”

The *interior life* understood as a symbiosis of contemplation and action.

The *obedience* understood as a mystery of faith.

The *love-communion* that makes us ready to give our life for our brothers and sisters.

The *supreme offering*: the pain desired by love. These attitudes become the centerpiece of a life lived in the footsteps of Christ with Mary.”

(Fr. Luigi Faccenda, *The Disciple Took Mary into His Home*, 1996, page 62-3)

* Fr. Faccenda, OFMConv. (1920-2005), is the Founder of the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata

Dates to Remember

- 1** **The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.** Solemnity; 39th World Day for Peace.
- 3** **The Most Holy Name of Jesus** (Franciscan Calendar).
- 8** **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD.**
St. Maximilian Kolbe’s birthday (1894).
- 9** **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD.**
- 18-25** **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.**
- 23** USA: Day of penance for violations committed against the dignity of the human person through acts of abortion, and of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right of life. For more information: www.usccb.org/prolife