

# MI Monthly Formation (10)

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

OCTOBER 2005 PRAYER INTENTION:

**That the Christian people rediscover their own missionary vocation  
and collaborate in announcing the Gospel to the whole world**

Dear Friends,

“The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. ... An overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service. It is the Spirit who impels us to proclaim the great works of God: *‘For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!’* (1 Cor 9: 16).”

With these inspired and weighty words, John Paul II began his missionary Encyclical *“Redemptoris Missio.”* The contents of this Encyclical offer us a vast and deep vision of the missionary dimension of the Church and of her catholicity. It also stresses the responsibility of the lay faithful in this regard when it says: “The mission *ad gentes* is incumbent upon the entire People of God. Whereas the foundation of a new church requires the Eucharist and hence the priestly ministry, missionary activity, which is carried out in a wide variety of ways, is the task of all the Christian faithful. It is clear that from the very origins of Christianity, the laity - as individuals, families, and entire communities - shared in spreading the faith.”<sup>1</sup> This does not necessarily mean that one is to go abroad in foreign missions but rather that every baptized people needs to foster a missionary heart and spirit in all that he or she does, suffers, plans and offers daily. In fact, “All the members of the laity ought to devote a part of their time to the Church, living their faith authentically.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, 71

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 74

Therefore, in this missionary month, I suggest that you re-read the articles of the MI General Statutes that refer to the MI Mission (see Art. 10-18). These articles offer an abundant and rich nourishment to all of us committed to *“leading all men to God through the Immaculata”* (St. Maximilian Kolbe).

This can also be a fruitful way to prepare ourselves and our groups for World Mission Sunday, which will be celebrated on October 23.

As you may know, World Mission Sunday, organized by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, is a day set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit themselves to the Church's missionary activity through prayer and sacrifice.

Annually, World Mission Sunday is celebrated on the next-to-last Sunday in October. As described by Pope John Paul II, World Mission Sunday is ‘an important day in the life of the Church because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, *in* the Eucharistic celebration and *for* all the missions of the world.’

In Mary, the Woman of the Eucharist, I wish you a spiritually fruitful month.

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### Suggested Readings for the Month

**1. From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*  
CCC 849-856**

**2. From John Paul II  
*Springtime of Evangelization*, The Complete  
Texts of the Holy Father's 1998 ad Limina  
Addresses to the Bishops of the USA, p. 30, 31:**

“The new evangelization –the Holy Father proposes- “will depend in a decisive way on the lay faithful being fully aware of their baptismal vocation and their responsibility for bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to their culture and society.”

“Lay people are at the forefront of the Church’s mission to evangelize all areas of human activity – including the workplace, the worlds of science and medicine, the world of politics, and the diverse world of culture – and the ‘first requirement of the new evangelization is *the actual witness of Christians who live by the Gospel.*”

**From the Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, 12/7/1990, n. 92**

“Like the apostles after Christ's Ascension, the Church must gather in the Upper Room ‘together with Mary, the Mother of Jesus’ (Acts 1:14), in order to pray for the Spirit and to gain strength and courage to carry out the missionary mandate. We too, like the apostles, need to be transformed and guided by the Spirit. On the eve of the third millennium the whole Church is invited to live more intensely the mystery of Christ by gratefully cooperating in the work of salvation. The Church does this together with Mary and following the example of Mary, the Church's Mother and model: Mary is the model of that maternal love which should inspire all who cooperate in the Church's apostolic mission for the rebirth of humanity. Therefore, ‘strengthened by the presence of Christ, the Church journeys through time toward the consummation of the ages and goes to meet the Lord who comes. But on this journey ...she proceeds along *the path* already trodden by the Virgin Mary.’

To ‘Mary's mediation, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power,’ I entrust the Church and, in particular, those who commit themselves to carrying out the missionary mandate in today's world. As Christ sent forth his apostles in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, so too, renewing that same mandate, I extend to all of you my apostolic blessing, in the name of the same Most Holy Trinity. Amen.”

**John Paul II**, *Message for the World Mission Sunday 2005*, “*Mission: Bread broken for the Life of the World*” that you can download from the Vatican web site:

[www.Vatican.va/Holy\\_Father/John\\_Paul\\_II/messages](http://www.Vatican.va/Holy_Father/John_Paul_II/messages); or [www.Vatican.va/latest](http://www.Vatican.va/latest).

**SK**, *Scritti 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.

### **3. Kolbean Spirituality:**

The MI: A Modern Way to Live the Gospel

### **12. *Magnificat*: Prophecy of Liberation**

Little by little, every person consecrated to the Immaculata comes to discover in Mary a mother, a teacher and the perfect model of what he or she is meant to be. In Mary’s Cantic, the *Magnificat (Lk 1: 46-55)*, which is the “mirror of her soul,” everyone can find his or her life’s project.

“The turnover of the arrogant of mind and heart announced in the *Magnificat* sounds like a prophecy of liberation that will be realized in history by Christ’s followers. The proclamation of the Gospel to all people will make God the Father known. This will cause the decline of all the false divinities and the subsequent fall of the oppressive regimes that build their power upon them. The Lord will be known as Savior (cf. Lk 1: 47) and, like Mary, the faithful will exult in him, according to what he had promised: ‘*When these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand*’ (Lk 21: 28)” (A. Maggi).

Mary’s true greatness dwells in her faith, in her believing in God’s words which, also through man’s collaboration, produce what they proclaim and contribute to change the world.

According to Mary’s Cantic, God’s mercy becomes visible when the arrogant are turned over and the humble are exulted. The proud, the rulers and the rich will no longer have

the last word but they will be thrown down from their thrones and sent away empty (cf. Lk 1: 51-53). What meaning and value do these words have on Mary's lips? They proclaim God's different logic which will be perfectly shown in Jesus' words and deeds.

According to the world's triangular-shaped schema, the rulers, the rich and the powerful are the few at the top (of the triangle) while the poor, the deprived, the powerless and all the uninfluential lay at its bottom. On the other hand, the Good News of Mary's Canticle proclaims that the little, the poor and the uninfluential are at the top because in God's schema the last will become first (cf. Mt 20: 16).

Therefore, since true consecration to Mary consists in imitating her, we need to foster and manifest throughout our lives the same prophetic courage that Mary shows and expresses in her *Magnificat*.

Pope Paul VI in his document "FOR THE RIGHT ORDERING AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY" (*Marialis Cultus* [MC]) stresses that "Mary of Nazareth, while completely devoted to the will of God, was far from being a timidly submissive woman or one whose piety was repellent to others; on the contrary, she was a woman who did not hesitate to proclaim that God vindicates the humble and the oppressed, and removes the powerful people of this world from their privileged positions (cf Lk. 1:51-53). The modern woman will recognize in Mary, who 'stands out among the poor and humble of the Lord,' a woman of strength, who experienced poverty and suffering, flight and exile (cf. Mt. 2:13-23)" (MC, 37).

Mary stands with those who are straggling for the recognition of their dignity and rights because she knows that every kind of oppression and injustice is contrary to God's plan.

John Paul II too reminded us that we need to renew our Christian "*commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being*. This too is an aspect which must clearly mark the Christian life, the Church's whole activity and her pastoral planning. The century and the millennium now beginning will need to see, and hopefully with still greater clarity, to what length of dedication the Christian community can go in charity towards the poorest. If we have truly started out anew from the

contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified: 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me' (*Mt 25:35-37*)."<sup>3</sup>

As believers in Christ, we ought to witness with frankness and joy that it is possible to love sincerely and generously as St. Maximilian Kolbe testified during his entire life, and with particular eloquence in Auschwitz. By being hospitable and welcoming we will make hope grow; by loving with pure heart and steadfast spirit we will bring God's merciful love to the world; and by imitating Mary we will look forward to sharing with hope and confidence our faith in Christ Jesus, the Redeemer of the world.

**The members of the Militia** of the Immaculata in fact, make their own the mission of the Church, namely, 'to bear the Gospel of Christ as a source of hope for all and a source of renewal for the society' (*ChL-Christifideles Laici* 29).<sup>4</sup>

May Our Lady find us worthy to continue her maternal mission today.

(12. End)

## The Holy Rosary

For over 500 years, the devotion of praying the Rosary has been one of the most popular forms of prayer among Catholics. It has become especially associated with the Blessed Mother who has appeared in several visions with a rosary in her hands urging us to pray it for peace in the world.

Missionaries of different Congregations and Institutes are the ones who strive to bring Christ's peace into the world. During the month of October it is suitable to pray the *Missionary Rosary* in order to encourage prayers for the mission's most urgent needs.

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<sup>3</sup> Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 49.

<sup>4</sup> MI General Statutes, n. 11.

## How to Pray the Missionary Rosary

Use a rosary with decade multicolored beads symbolizing each continent: red-Americas, green Africa, white-Europe, blue-Oceania, and yellow-Asia. When starting each decade, you may offer particular intentions of prayer for the need of that continent. At the end of the Rosary, you may add a missionary prayer as follows:

*“Mother of the Church, grant that the Church may enjoy freedom and peace in fulfilling her saving mission and that to this end she may become mature with a new maturity of faith and inner unity. Help us to overcome opposition and difficulties. Help us to rediscover all the simplicity and dignity of the Christian vocation. Grant that there may be no lack of “laborers in the Lord’s vineyard.”*

*Sanctify families. Watch over the souls of the young and the hearts of the children. Help us to overcome the great moral threats against the fundamental spheres of life and love. Obtain for us the grace to be continually renewed through all the beauty of witness given to the cross and resurrection of your Son. Amen”*

*John Paul II*

“O Mary most holy, first missionary of your Son, you went in haste to the hill country of Judea to bring salvation to the house of John the Baptist: grant us your same apostolic zeal. Make us docile instruments of God’s mercy toward mankind suffering the consequences of sin. Enable us to bring joy where there is sorrow and hope where there is despair. Help us to strengthen the faith of those who doubt, to support the hope of those who are weak, and to be examples of generous charity.

Teach us how to admonish sinners, to soften hardened hearts, to show the path of salvation to the simple and little ones, to inflame lukewarm hearts, and to help the faithful strive for holiness.

Accept our daily offering of sufferings, sacrifices, and humiliations. Purify and offer them to your Son, Jesus, asking for numerous and zealous missionary vocations. Having loved and venerated you on earth make us worthy to contemplate you forever in the glory of heaven. Amen.

Fr. Luigi Faccenda, OFM CONV, Italy

## Dates to Remember

- 1 *Thérèse of the Child Jesus*, virgin and doctor of the Church. First Saturday.
- 2 **Respect Life Sunday**. Begun in 1972, the Respect Life program brings information about Church teaching on the value and dignity of human life to the Catholic community and the wider public. The program combines education, prayer, services and advocacy.
- 4 **St. Francis of Assisi**. For the Franciscan Order: Solemnity.
- 7 **Our Lady of the Rosary**. Memorial established by Pope Pius V in gratitude for the Christian victory in the sea battle near Lepanto on October 7, 1571. Victory attributed to praying the rosary. First Friday.
- 10 23rd Anniversary of **St. Maximilian’s canonization**. Canadian Thanksgiving Day.
- 16 *St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*, virgin.  
**88<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of the MI**. Plenary Indulgence for MIers.
- 23 **World Mission Sunday**.
- 31 1942: Pope Pius XII consecrated the whole world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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**The special Year of the Eucharist** ends this month, after the assembly of Synod Bishops held in Vatican on **October 2-29**.