

## MI Monthly Formation (9)

In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality

SEPTEMBER 2005 PRAYER INTENTION:

**That those who work in the mass media and entertainment fields may be conscious of their responsibilities and be inspired by human and Christian values**

Dear Friends,

Let us focus our attention on the Marian feast and memorial of this month.<sup>1</sup> The feast of the Nativity of the BVM is connected with the basilica constructed in the fifth century on the site of the pool at Bethesda (cf. Jn 5: 1-9). That was the supposed location of Joachim and Ann's home, where the basilica of St. Ann stands today.

In the Opening Prayer of the Mass we read that *"The birth of the Virgin Mary's Son was the dawn of our salvation."* The same theme is found in the Entrance Antiphon when we refer to Mary, *"of whom was born the Sun of justice, Christ our Lord."* Hence, the focal point of the feast is Jesus Christ, but we know that Mary is inseparably linked with her Son's saving work. Consequently, to celebrate Mary's birth means to worship her Son, Christ the Lord. In fact, *"Today we celebrate that happy day on which the glorious and immaculate Mother of God appeared in the world like a shining star. After the sin of the first woman, there was finally opened to us the long-desired gate of life and we have been called by the Son of the Virgin Mary out of the darkness into the joy of eternal light"* (Preface).

The Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was especially promoted by the Cistercians and the Servites. It is the patronal feast of the Servite Order. Falling as it does on the day after the feast of the Holy Cross, this memorial reminds the faithful of Mary's intense suffering during the passion and death of Christ. It refers to all the sorrows of Mary, as indicated by Simeon's words in the Entrance

Antiphon: *"and your own soul a sword shall pierce."* Mary's participation in the sufferings and passion of Christ was different from that of other Christians; it was special because she is his mother. Moreover, as our Mother, she plays an active role as Mediatrix in our redemption by transmitting to us the fruits of Christ's passion. Therefore, today, *"As we honor the compassionate love of the Virgin Mary, may we make up in our own lives whatever is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the good of the Church"* (Prayer after Communion).

This is what St. Maximilian meant when he confided: *"Crosses will fall upon us, but the grace of God will warm our hearts, inflaming them with such love that we will burn with the desire to suffer, without limits: to suffer humiliations, scoffing, sneers, forgetfulness and the contempt of others, in order that we may show by this how we love our Father, and our best Friend [Jesus] and his most dear Mother, the Immaculata. For suffering is the school of love, its firebrand and strength. 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (2 Cor 6: 10). Behold, this is what it means to live for an ideal!"* (SK 1248). Yes! This is what it means to live our consecration to the Immaculata!

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### Suggested Readings for the Month

**1. From the *Catechism of the Catholic Church***  
CCC 2493-2499; 2523

**2. From the Pope on Mass Media:**

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<sup>1</sup> See Enzo Lodi, *Saints of the Roman Calendar*, Alba House, NY1992

**Message of the Holy Father John Paul II for the 38th World Communications Day: *The Media and the Family*. May 23, 2004 in [www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/messages](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/messages)**

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

#### The MI: A Modern Way to Live the Gospel

*Thoughts and reflections about the Militia of the Immaculata as it was intended and proposed by St. Maximilian. This section may provide you with more insights and greater enthusiasm, giving you a better understanding of your true identity as MIs.*

#### **11. What the MI Does?**

What are the specific activities of the MI? Fr. Kolbe in 1938 wrote: *“The MI’s apostolate can be organized and shaped according to the different and various circumstances in which one may find himself”* (SK 803). In another letter he clarified, *“In the MI we need to distinguish two things: the essence and the form of organization or apostolate. The unconditional and unlimited consecration to the Immaculata is the essence of the MI. Any kind of organization or apostolate can be good and useful, but it is not per se necessary in order to be a zealous MIr”* (SK 836).

It is clear, then, that in St. Maximilian’s thought, the activity is secondary while the quality of our consecration to the Immaculata is essential to the goals of the Movement: the conversion and sanctification of all, under the protection and with the mediation of the BV. Immaculata.

Fr. Kolbe teaches us that we should *“often pray the Immaculata to inspire us regarding what we should do and how we should do it. Moreover, we need to call upon her asking her to be interiorly strengthened in order to be able to perform even the more difficult and heroic actions”* (SK 1218).

The MI is not ours but hers. Therefore, we strive to be *“ the most suitable instruments possible in her immaculate hands, that is to let her lead us in the most perfect way. Through the most perfect obedience she shows her will and leads us as instruments”* (SK 339) to achieve the MI’s scope.

Therefore, the identity and value of every MIr do not come from what he does but from the relationship he is able to establish with the Virgin Mary. What really matters is *“to be her children, slaves, property, things, and everything”* (SK 339).

Such relationship, necessary and fundamental, qualifies the activity one does. In fact, if the relationship is good, then everything we do is good and we will experience the same apostolic and tireless zeal, which characterized the entire life of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

(11. To be continued)

#### For Personal Reflection

- How do I improve my knowledge of the Virgin Mary? Do I nurture my relationship with her through study, spiritual readings and prayer?
- What is more important for me: what I am or what I do and what I achieve?
- How am I sharing in the sufferings of Christ with Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows?
- Do I take advantage of this Marian memorial to present the reality of the Knights at the Foot of the Cross to the sick, the elder, and the handicapped?

#### Resources

##### **On St. Maximilian Kolbe:**

Patricia Treece, *A Man for Others*, Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL, 1982

Andre Frossard, *Forget Not Love*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1991

##### **On the Eucharist:**

Jerzy Domanski, *For the Life of the World – St. Maximilian Kolbe and the Eucharist*, Accademy of the Immaculatae, Newbedford, MA, 1999.

This special Year of the Eucharist began with the World Eucharistic Congress, October 10-17, 2004, in Guadalajara, Mexico. It ends with the ordinary assembly of Synod Bishops held in the Vatican **October 2-29, 2005.**

The theme of the Synod is: "**The Eucharist: Source and Summit of the Life and Mission of the Church.**"

On this topic you may find interesting references in: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)  
[www.therealpresence.org](http://www.therealpresence.org)  
[www.catholiccompany.com](http://www.catholiccompany.com)

**John Paul II**, *Mane Nobiscum Domine (Remain with us, Lord)*, Apostolic Letter for the Year of the Eucharist, 10/7/04

**USCCB** latest at:  
<http://www.usccb.org>

**On Mass Media** see Pontificium Consilium De Communicationibus Socialibus, Pastoral Instruction *Aetatis Novae*, February 22, 1992 in [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

**Marian Feasts and Devotion** for the month of September at:  
<http://www.udayton.edu/mary>

**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.

Or in: *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit*, Manteau-Bonamy, Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL, 2001.

## Dates to Remember

- 3** *St. Gregory the Great*. Obligatory Memorial. First Saturday of the month.
- 5** Labor Day (USA).
- 8** **The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Feast.
- 12** *The Most Holy Name of the BVM*. Optional Memorial.
- 14** **THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**. Feast.
- 15** **Our Lady of Sorrows**. Obligatory Memorial.
- 17** **Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi**. Feast.
- 29** **Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael Archangels**. Feast.

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