
MI MONTHLY FORMATION (11 & 12)
In Fr. Kolbe's Marian and Missionary Spirituality

NOVEMBER 2006 PRAYER INTENTION:

That women, with you as their model, might live their own vocation with attitudes of humility, listening, faithfulness and praise.

DECEMBER 2006 PRAYER INTENTION:

That you continue, through us, to revive in the hearts of all love for your Son Jesus, the only Savior of the world.



Dear Friends,

The month of November opens with the celebration of All Saints as a powerful reminder of our universal call to holiness. Catholic saints are holy people and human people who lived extraordinary lives. Each saint the Church honors responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gifts. Their legacy is above all what they did, in faithful and generous response to God's will. To be their heirs means to allow God to work in us as He did in them –as He did in St. Maximilian Kolbe and in many of his followers.

St. Maximilian continually invites us “to come closer to the Immaculata, 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 have been reflecting upon each one of these “pillars” or centerpieces to which the MI General Statutes refer in the articles regarding “Spirituality and Formation.”

*In this last MI Monthly Formation for the year 2006 I would like to offer you some hints for your further reflection on **suffering willed out of love**.*

And finally... “Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!” (Psalm 136:1). Have a blessed Thanksgiving!

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A powerful meditation on “Mary, witness to suffering with love and faith in *The Passion of the Christ*” can be found online at http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/lesson_plans/lp0087.html

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER DEEPENING THE THEME

MI General Statutes

www.consecration.com/statutes.html

Article 7

After the example of Mary, Virgin in listening, Virgin in prayer, Virgin Mother, Virgin offering (MC 17-20), members of the Militia of the Immaculata recognize the fundamental value of listening to the Word of God, of the liturgical celebration, of prayer, of charity towards others, of offering one's own being, in order to collaborate with Christ in the salvation of the world.

Article 15

All members of the MI, aware of always and everywhere being missionaries, are such to the extent in which they live the union with Christ Redeemer after the example of Mary.

In recognizing that the true missionary is holy, they give first place to the evangelical vehicles of prayer, sacrifice and the witness of their life (*RMI-Redemptoris Missio* 90). Father Kolbe also strongly recommends spreading the Miraculous Medal, a sign of Mary's maternal concern for sinners and a propitious opportunity for their conversion.

Article 16

Persons who suffer constitute a significant presence in the Association. Their consecration to the Immaculata in

This month's topic is a wonderful opportunity for all MI members to delve more deeply into the special vocation of the Knights at the Foot of the Cross. The following excerpt is taken from our MI website: www.consecration.com. Don't miss this beautiful opportunity for learning more about it and for preparing yourself to present it.

MARY AND MAXIMILIAN: MODELS OF REPARATIONAL SUFFERING

Mary Immaculate is a special model of reparational suffering. Standing at the Cross in interior distress, her soul "pierced by a sword" (Lk 2:35), she offered all to the Father in a silent, "Thy will be done." She invites us, and strengthens us, to do the same through our MI consecration as a Knight at the Foot of the Cross.

St. Maximilian Kolbe also is a model of reparational suffering. Imprisoned at the Auschwitz death camp, Maximilian "emptied himself" for the Gospel (Phil 2:7). He shared his meager food and water with fellow prisoners while tending to their spiritual needs. He persevered in charity toward his Nazi captors though they singled him out for special brutalities as a Catholic priest. He willingly endured the torture of the starvation bunker by taking the place of another

Church's Teaching

FROM THE COMPENDIUM OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

314. What is the significance of Jesus' compassion for the sick?

The compassion of Jesus toward the sick and his many healings of the infirm were a clear sign that with him had come the Kingdom of God and therefore victory over sin, over suffering, and over death. By his own passion and death he gave new meaning to our suffering which, when united with his own, can become a means of purification and of salvation for us and for others.

See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) #1503-1505

**From the Writings of Fr. Luigi Faccenda,
Ofm Conv.***

***Supreme Offering:
Suffering Willed Out of Love***

“The life of man consists of three parts: preparation for work, work itself, and suffering. Through these stages God brings us closer to Himself. The more a soul is striving for sanctity, the sooner it is readied for the third stage, placing its love for the Immaculata on the foundation of suffering out of love.”¹

Suffering willed out of love –the fourth pillar of our consecration– means to accept and love sorrows and sufferings in our life, and to make a total offering of ourselves to God for the redemption of the world through Mary.

Those who consecrate themselves to the Immaculata, the Virgin Presenting Offerings, should not ask for any special suffering, like sickness, trials, or martyrdom. Instead, they serenely, should leave her the total freedom to use themselves as instruments and to do whatever she wants. They place themselves in the attitude of embracing everything with a humble spirit of faith and love in union with Christ Crucified. Christian life, in fact, consists in participating in Christ’s life. Christian perfection is the perfect imitation of Him who made of his life a total self-offering. St. Paul writes: “Be imitators of God as his dear children. Follow the way of love, even as Christ loved you. He gave himself for us as an offering to God, a gift of pleasing fragrance” (Eph 5:1-2).²

¹ St. Maximilian Kolbe, Address given August 28, 1939, *Maria Was His Middle Name*, 174.

² Fr. Luigi Faccenda, *One More Gift*, 1991, page 77-78).

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

Dates to Remember

- November -

- 1 All Saints
- 2 **The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed** (All Souls)
- 4 First Saturday of the Month
- 13 *St. Frances Xavier Cabrini*. First U.S. citizen canonized (1946); patroness of immigrants and migrants.
- 17 *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*. Patroness of the Franciscan Third Order and of Catholic charities
- 21 The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Memorial)
- 23 **Thanksgiving Day** (USA)
- 26 **OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THE KING (Solemnity)**
- 27 *Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal*, Rue du Bac, 1830, Paris.
- 29 **Novena** in honor of the **Immaculate Conception of Mary** begins. Feast of All Saints of the Franciscan Order. On November 29, 1223, Pope Honorius III approved the Friars Minor’s Rule.
- 30 St. Andrew, Apostle (Feast)

- December -

- 2 First Saturday of the Month
- 3 **First Sunday of Advent**. The New Liturgical Year begins. The Lectionary cycles are as follow: **Year C**: Sunday cycle; **Year 1**: Weekday cycle in Ordinary Time.
- 8 **IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**, Patroness of the U.S. Holy day of obligation. Plenary Indulgence for MI members.
- 9 **Juan Diego, hermit**
- 12 **Our Lady of Guadalupe** (Feast)
- 16-24 **Christmas Novena**
- 25 **NATIVITY OF THE LORD**
- 26 *St. Stephen*, First Martyr
- 27 *St. John*, Apostle and Evangelist
- 28 *The Holy Innocents*, Martyrs
- 31 **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

The opening prayer and the selected passages for daily reflection are taken from the writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

Opening Prayer to the Immaculata

- Leader: *O Immaculata, Queen of heaven and earth,*
- All: I know I am not worthy to approach you, to fall on my knees before you with my face to the ground, but since I love you so much, I dare to ask you to be so good as to tell me who you are.
- Leader: *The truth is that I desire to know you better every day,*
- All: unlimitedly better, and love you ever more ardently, with a boundless passion. Moreover, I desire to reveal to other souls who you are, so that a growing number of people may know you ever more perfectly and love you ever more passionately, so that you may become the Queen of all hearts, both present and future, and this as soon as possible!
- Leader: *Even today, some do not even know your name.*
- All: Others, immersed in the gutter of immorality, do not dare to look up at you. Still, there are also those who believe they do not need you to reach their purpose in life; but there are also those whom Satan — the angel that was transformed into a demon for not recognizing you as his Queen — does not allow to pay you homage.
- Leader: *Many are those who love you, but only few are prepared to do anything you ask of them, like toiling, suffering, and even offering their lives in sacrifice!*
- All: O Queen of heaven and earth, I pray that you may soon reign in every single heart and that all men may recognize you as their Mother and

God as their heavenly Father, thus loving one another as brothers and sisters. Amen.

Day 1—November 29

“Who are you, my Lady? Who are you, O Immaculate Conception? In order to understand more accurately who the Immaculata is, it is absolutely necessary to admit one’s total nothingness, to bring oneself to humble prayer in order to gain the grace of knowing her, and to endeavor personally to experience her goodness and power.”

Day 2—November 30

“Immaculata: the summit of perfection of a creature, Mother of God, the most godlike of creatures. The purpose of the creature, the purpose of man, is the progressive growth in likeness to the Creator, a constantly more perfect godliness. We imitate good, virtuous, holy people, but none of these is without imperfection. Only she, immaculate from the first moment of her existence, knows no fault, not the least. It is she whom one should imitate and come close to. We should become hers, become *her*. Behold the peak of perfection in man.”



Day 3—December 1

“The Immaculata is the work of God and like every other such work is without comparison and entirely dependent upon her Creator. She is simultaneously the most perfect and most holy work of God for, as St. Bonaventure maintains, ‘God can create a greater and more perfect world, but he cannot exalt a creature to higher dignity than that to which he exalted Mary.’ The Immaculata is the final ‘line of demarcation’

between God and creation. She is a faithful image of divine perfection and holiness.”

Day 4—December 2

“At Lourdes Our Lady, when questioned by Bernardette as to her identity, frequently replied: ‘I am the Immaculate Conception.’ In these clear words, she expressed the fact that not only was she immaculately conceived, but that she is the Immaculate Conception, just as something white differs from its whiteness, or something perfect from its perfection. The Immaculate Virgin, however, had her origin from God. She is a creature, a conception, moreover, the Immaculate Conception. What profound mysteries are hidden in these words!”

Day 5—December 3

“The will of the Immaculata is strictly united to the will of the Holy Spirit and to the extent that it identifies with it. That is why in consecrating ourselves to the Immaculata and doing her will, we also give ourselves to Jesus to do his will.... Every prayer, through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin and every act of fulfilling her will, brings God glory and honors him most perfectly.”

Day 6—December 4

“We have refuge to the Immaculata and we are instruments in her hands, for she distributes all graces of conversion and sanctification to the inhabitants of this valley of tears. We clearly profess this truth in the act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary: ‘Since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.’”

Day 7—December 5

“Every day let us all the more become the Immaculata’s, and in her and through her, of Jesus, of God. Let us not serve God the Father *and* Jesus *and* the Immaculata, but God in Jesus and through him, and Jesus in the Immaculata and through the Immaculata. In other words, let us belong to the Immaculata directly, unreservedly and exclusively. Then with her, in her and through her we belong to Jesus. And with him, in him and through him we belong to God the Father.”

Day 8—December 6

“Let us remember that the essence of our dedication to the Immaculata and our perfection of dedication does not consist in a continual feeling or remembrance of it, but in our will. If then someone would not sense the sweetness of intimacy with her at all, nor be continually mindful of her, nor think much of her for some reason or another; but if his will sticks by her and does not retract its surrender, and still renews it according to its ability, then let him be at peace, because she reigns in his heart.”

Day 9—December 7

“Let us take care to prepare as best we can for the special feast of December 8, to rejuvenate ourselves in the Immaculata. Would that on the occasion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception we become increasingly and more quickly her own, her property, her possession, and so on—in a word hers; hers in the strictest acceptance of the word; most perfectly hers in life, death and eternity!”

Closing Prayer

Leader: *Father, you prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of your Son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by his death, and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in your presence without sin. We ask this through Christ our Lord.*

All: Amen.

Leader: *O Mary, conceived without sin,*
All: Pray for us who have recourse to you, and for those who do not have recourse to you, especially the enemies of the Holy Church and those who are recommended to you.