



December 8  
Solemnity of the  
Immaculate Conception  
(pg 2) and Opening of the  
Jubilee of Mercy

## MI Monthly Intention

*Immaculata,  
please intercede...  
that the  
consecrated  
persons may be  
bearers of Christ's  
light where there is  
the darkness of  
distrust and  
discouragement.*

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## MI International President Raffaella Aguzzoni

Since the foundation of the MI by St. Maximilian in 1917, Conventual Franciscans have held the office of MI International President. Raffaella Aguzzoni was the first woman to hold this office. She was a member of the secular institute, Fr. Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata with its central house close to Bologna, Italy. She served on the Institute's General Council for three terms. During the later she was elected as Vice-General Directress, an office she held until her death.

As MI International President, Raffaella, working with her Council, sought to unite the many MI realities in the world and collaborated with the Sacred Congregation for the Laity on the renewed International Statutes. Some of her last works were the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Maximilian's martyrdom and preparation for the MI's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of foundation with a Congress in Fatima. Also she saw the beginning of the MI International website and spearheaded the long awaited translation of the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe into the English language.

Raffaella was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in Christmas of 2014 and cancer in Easter of 2015. In six months her health declined rapidly and she entered the third stage of the total consecration, suffering willed out of love. She was



lovingly cared for by her sister Missionaries and visited by Missionaries, MI members, friends and priests. She was profoundly –p.2



*Testimony: As Legal Representative and member of the International Council of the M.I., I worked closely with Raffaella during her first term as International President. In those transitional years, I fondly remember how we passed from more serious talks to lighter conversations which usually elicited Raffaella's gentle and generous laughter. Always respectful and attentive when I would bring up more ponderous canonical questions, Raffaella would respond from a balanced spiritual perspective that was disarming and settling. By her demeanor, I always*



## The Immaculate Conception

The Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from the stain of original sin in the first instant of her conception in the womb of her mother. This was a singular privilege and grace of God, granted in view of the merits of Jesus Christ. By her conception is meant not the act or part of her parents in it, nor the formation of her body, nor the conception of Christ later in her own womb; from the moment her soul was created and infused into her body, it was free from original sin and filled with sanctifying grace. Her soul was never stained by original sin, nor by the depraved emotions, passions, and weaknesses consequent on that sin, but created in a state of original sanctity, innocence, and justice. She had at least the graces of the first Eve before the fall and more.

This privilege was befitting the one who was to be mother of the Redeemer. The doctrine was defined by Blessed Pope Pius IX, Dec. 8, 1854. It is in accord with the texts of Scripture (Genesis 3), "I will put enmities between you [the serpent] and the woman, and your seed and her seed"; (Luke 1), "Hail, full of grace."

*sensed that she was that instrument in the hands of the Immaculate working for the conversion of all around her, including me!*

*Rest in peace, dear friend. Raffaella still had much to do for the M.I. and undoubtedly for the institute. With the Lord's affirmation, she will now complete that work for us from her place in heaven.*

*Your brother in St. Maximilian,  
Jobe Abbass, OFM Conv., OLA  
Province M.I. Assistant*

loved by everyone. She passed two days after her 56<sup>th</sup> birthday on November 5th. The Mass of burial was celebrated by 18 clergy, with the main celebrant, Fr. Marco Tasca, Father General of the Conventual Franciscans. Her body now lies in the local cemetery, close to the Missionaries central house in Pontecchio Marconi, Italy.

Memorial Masses have been and continue to be celebrated for the repose of her soul throughout the world by MI groups. In England the MI will hold a children's Christmas concert in her honor.

-A prayer card can be acquired by contacting the Fr. Kolbe Missionaries.



## Kolbe, A Light In The Darkness

The Polish saint, in his *times, illuminated humanities' darkness and the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was a real and true light in the dark, as St. John Paul II noted: "Maximilian didn't die, but 'gave his*

*life... for his brother'. In that death, terrible from the human point of view, there was the whole definitive greatness of the human act and the human choice. He spontaneously offered himself up to death out of love. And in this human death of his there was the clear witness borne to Christ: the witness borne in Christ to the dignity of man, to the sanctity of his life, and to the saving power of death in which the power of love is made manifest. Precisely for this reason the death of Maximilian Kolbe became a sign of victory. This was victory won over all systematic contempt and hate for man and for what is divine in man – a victory like that won by Our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary."* (from the homily of John Paul II on the day of the Canonization of Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Oct. 10, 1982).

*Maximillian was a light in the darkness. He always sought to understand the needs and the characteristics, of the society he lived in. He had a keen ability to listen and observe the reality around him. He studied the way to preach and testify with the greatest credibility in his social context. He possessed solid doctrinal faith and, at the same time, the docility necessary to adapt and speak to the world in a comprehensive and profound way. Certainly, this outlook can be a splendid reference point, for our evangelization also.*

*Saint Maximilian demonstrated great courage in proposing, with faith and conviction, ever new ways to preach the Gospel. He was a magnificent innovator, as shown by his numerous apostolic choices. He brought a real and true novelty, for example, using the press, the radio and the television. He courageously founded*

the new mission in Japan, a “demanding” country, which called for a strong sense of enculturation. In fact, he showed great open-mindedness, towards the diversity of places and persons in that country. Extreme respect for people characterized his missionary style, which at that time was rare. He demonstrated courage in preaching the Gospel, risking his life in the concentration camp of Auschwitz. An ardent and heroic Christian charity always moved him; he expressed this particularly, with the prisoners and military. And this charitable way of acting is still a fount of inspiration, especially for the younger generations.

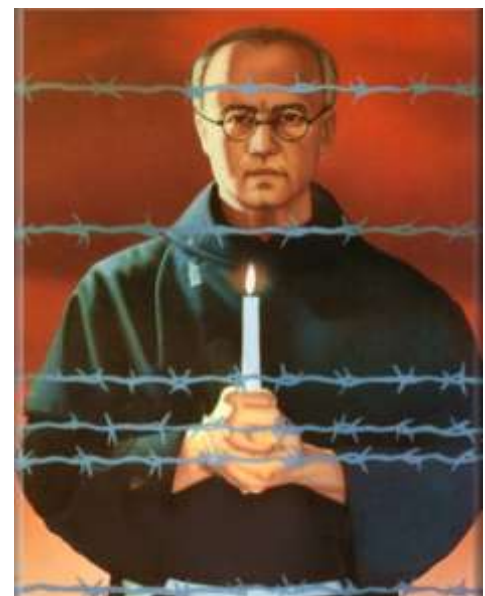
Courage was necessary to lead a community of about eight hundred friars at Niepokalanow. With an extraordinary organization he harmonized the diversity between each friar. In the spirit of the parable of the talents he drew out the best in them. He was attentive to the needs of all; he tried to dialog serenely, constructively and comprehensively with the friars. His way of being, evidently a fruit of prayer, was convincing apostolically. In all his works, the Polish martyr tried, by word and example, to illuminate the society he lived in, overrun by war and hatred. Every means was useful, to evangelically enlighten humanity, as Kolbe meaningfully expressed: “the press, radio, literature, art, theater, cinema, legislation, the offices of deputies, of senators, and the extremely diverse organizations directed towards destroying perverse organizations, and preserving the full development of the God given gifts of soul and body, imparted to every man, according to the laws of God, (everything can be used) to help all classes of human society, in all conditions and circumstances, from the cradle to the tomb.” (KW 200) Saint Maximilian evangelized with every means, and encouraged his co-friars and the MI members, to do the same. The axis ‘work and talents’ made a fruitful, rich apostolate possible.

Preaching, art, and social means of communication: everything can be useful for the mission, where there is a strict union between prayer and work. Only like this will personal sanctification, and that of our neighbor, be realized. In seeking the full potential of people and means, it was possible for the saint to form a real and proper school of evangelization. From this harmony, between life and union with God, is born the best utilization of the person’s gifts, for the Kingdom. It’s the great teaching of Fr. Kolbe, the mystic and organizer.

### For Reflection

- ? How can I be a light in the world I live in?
- ? How can I help my neighbor who lives in darkness?
- ? How can I be a sign of hope in the society I live in?
- ? How can I help my brothers and sisters who live through moments of despair?
- ? Do I balance prayer and work well, in order to sustain my brothers and sisters?
- ? Do I have the courage to preach and testify to Christ to those suffering?

-Fr. Raffaele Di Muro  
MI International Assistant  
Translated by Antonia Velasco & Ann O’Donnell



*It is with great joy that we announce the publication and availability to purchase the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe!!!!*

## The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe

VOLUME I: LETTERS • VOLUME II: VARIOUS WRITINGS

**Now Available in English!**

The Polish-born Franciscan Friar had spent twenty-three years as a priest, evangelizer, media mogul, social commentator, missionary and religious reformer. His life's work was cut short at age 47, when he offered up his life for another prisoner in Auschwitz concentration camp. St. Kolbe nonetheless left behind an impressive body of writings. In the 1950s the English-speaking world first began reading bits and pieces of those writings translated from the original Polish, Italian and Latin. Now, at long last, devotees and scholars alike can find the entire wide-ranging array of those writings collected together in a two-volume compendium, edited by Antonella Di Piazza, published by Nerbini International.

Pre-order your copies today for February 2016 Delivery from  
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Volume I: 1520 pp. Hardcover. Volume II: 1038 pp., with 16 black and white illustrations, Hardcover.  
Size: 9-1/2" x 6- 5/8." Price \$95 (both volumes + \$15 S&H Continental United States)



### MI National and Local News

The **MI National Board** will meet Dec 9-11 at Marytown in preparation for the first Elective Assembly for the MI to be held for the United States! June 3-5, 2016—Marytown. Please pray for their deliberations.

**Position Open: MI National Young Adult Coordinator.** Contact Christine Rossi at [immaculate8@kc.rr.com](mailto:immaculate8@kc.rr.com)

### Marytown New Year's Eve Young Adult Retreat Ages 18—35

December 29—January 1  
Conferences, Periods of Prayer, Sacraments, Fellowship,  
New Year's Eve Mass & Celebration  
*Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Will Receive Mercy*  
Contact: Fr. Anthony Lajato, OFM Conv

Soul of the Departed

**Cindy Venegas Olson** passed away at the age of 54 in her home, straddling the feast of All Souls and Solemnity of All Saints. She was surrounded by her husband, Scott, son, Gabe and sisters, Juanita and Maria and one of her seven brothers, Fr. Dennis, LC. After years of struggling with health issues she succumbed to the effects of numerous brain tumors. Cindy was a Knight at the Foot of the Cross. A few days before passing she renewed her total consecration to the Immaculata with Fr. Kolbe Missionary, Ann O'Donnell, who flew to be in communion with her due to her life history of dedication, service and love for the Kolbean ideal. Her sisters said that when she had visitors she would show them pictures of her friends from the YMI (Youth Mission for the Immaculata in the 1970-90's). She was a brave and loving soul. May she rest in peace. Anoka, Minnesota



L-R Juanita, Scott, Gabe, Cindy, Ann, Mary (Jude) & Frank Sullivan

MarytownMI National Office**MI Adults Monthly Meetings**

Third Saturday of the Month

10:00—11:45 AM followed by Noon Mass

**MI Pilgrimage to Poland**

In the Footsteps of St. Maximilian Kolbe

The MI National Office is planning this event during the Jubilee Year of Mercy with Mater Dei Tours.

September 6-17, 2016 Contact: [www.materdeitours.com](http://www.materdeitours.com) Tel: 800-515-2632

MI Midwest**Consecration-midwest****Kansas City, MO**

We did a special tribute and memorial for Raffaella at our November anniversary program. We had over 100 there and her picture was at the foot of Our Lady of Fatima statue with a candle lit. Dale Anderson is a man who has over 100 First Class Relics along with the stories of many of the saints...and he puts on a program that is so awesome. We also had the Chancellor from our Archdiocese to bless our salt, water, oil and Benediction medals. It was great.

Modesto, CA

St Joseph Church <http://www.stjmod.com/outreach-ministries.html>

MI Adult Prayer Village

MI Family Village

Immaculada Espanol

Fr. Kolbe Missionaries**West Covina, CA [www.kolbemission.org/en](http://www.kolbemission.org/en)**

November 7 was a memorial Mass for Raffaella who had served nine years in the California mission. Frs. Pascal Nguyen and Gregory Dick, OPraem grew up in the MI and were present along with many adults who were youth when Raffaella was animating youth in the MI.

Dec 6 Sunday Retreat in Preparation for the Year of Mercy with Mary and Total Consecration to the Immaculata.

Dec 8 Rite of Total Consecration, St. Christopher Church, after the 8:30AM Mass.

Dec 11 MI Teens, 6-9PM

Dec 12 Renewal of Total Consecration, 10-12PM.

### West Haven, UT

#### MI Families of the Immaculata Village

St Mary's Catholic Church [www.stmary.org](http://www.stmary.org)

Raffaella's picture with candle were at the entrance of our church for the weekend after her death.

December 6<sup>th</sup>, feast of St. Nicholas, we will be doing our annual Advent Caroling at a local assisted living facility. We will be distributing greeting cards and caroling to residence and staff members. In addition we are inviting parishioners to make their total consecrations through the use of the book Total Consecration to Mary: The Theology and History with a Nine-day Preparation in the Spirit of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

### Links

MI International Calendar <http://www.mi-international.org/calendario.asp?month 12&year-2015>

US Catholic Conference of Bishops [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

Zenit News Service [info@zenit.org](mailto:info@zenit.org)

### **Advent/Year Christmas 2015of Mercy**

This is the year of the 75th Anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe. While it is a time of celebration, it is also a time to reflect upon how far we will go to live our consecration to its fullest. As you know, 2016 has been declared a Year of Mercy by Pope Francis. By offering your prayers and sacrifices it can become a Year of Overflowing Grace. Fr. Patrick Greenough, OFM Conv

"In the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to his plan of salvation, he sent his only son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God." Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus 24

*May your Christmas be rich in the Mercy of God, Jesus Christ!*



### **Daily Renewal of Total Consecration**

Immaculata, Queen and Mother of the Church, I renew my consecration to you this day and for always, so that you may use me for the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus in the whole world. To this end I offer you all my prayers, actions and sacrifices of this day.

### **Daily Miraculous Medal Prayer of St. Maximilian**

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you, and for all those who do not have recourse to you, especially the enemies of and all those recommended to you.

#### **2015-2016 Annual Theme:**

*In your place* **Kolbe, Martyr of Charity and Sign of God's Mercy**

Introduction: the intentions for the year 2016 take into consideration the 75th anniversary of St. Maximilian's martyrdom and the celebration of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year proclaimed by Pope Francis, whose theme is mercy.

Monthly intentions can be found at : [http://www.mi-international.org/NEWS/public/ENG\\_Intentions2016.pdf](http://www.mi-international.org/NEWS/public/ENG_Intentions2016.pdf)

ESPAÑOL

Tema de la MI para diciembre del 2015

## Kolbe: una luz en la oscuridad

El santo polaco ha iluminado las tinieblas de la humanidad de su tiempo y del campo de concentración de Auschwitz: él, ha sido una verdadera *luz en la oscuridad*, como subraya san Juan Pablo II: «Maximiliano no murió, "dio la vida... por el hermano". En esta muerte, terrible desde el punto de vista humano, estaba toda la definitiva grandeza del acto y de la opción humana: voluntariamente se ofreció a la muerte por amor. En ésta, su muerte humana, había un testimonio transparente de Cristo: el testimonio dado en Cristo a la dignidad del hombre, a la santidad de su vida y a la fuerza salvadora de la muerte, en la que se manifiesta la fuerza del amor. Por esto, la muerte de Maximiliano Kolbe se convirtió en un signo de victoria. La victoria conseguida sobre todo el sistema de desprecio y odio hacia el hombre y hacia lo que de divino existe en el hombre; victoria semejante a la conseguida por nuestro Señor Jesucristo en el calvario» (de la homilía de Juan Pablo II en el día de la Canonización de San Maximiliano Kolbe).

Maximiliano es *una luz en la oscuridad* porque está siempre en búsqueda de las situaciones y características de la sociedad en la que vive. Es muy alto el nivel de su escucha y de su observación respecto a la realidad que lo circunda. Está siempre disponible a comprender en qué modo anunciar, predicar y dar testimonio con la mayor credibilidad posible en el contexto social en el cual está injertado. Demuestra de poseer sólidos contenidos doctrinales y al mismo tiempo de tener la flexibilidad y la docilidad necesarias para hablar al mundo en modo comprensible y profundo. Ciertamente esta actitud representa un espléndido punto de referencia también para nuestra evangelización.



San Maximiliano demuestra mucho coraje al proponer con fe y convicción siempre nuevos caminos para predicar el Evangelio. Es un magnífico innovador, gracias a las numerosas elecciones apostólicas, que constituye verdaderas y propias novedades como, por ejemplo, el uso de la prensa, de la radio, de la televisión. Tiene mucho coraje a la hora de fundar la misión en Japón, un país "muy comprometedor", que necesita de una inculturación fuerte. Él, en efecto, demuestra una gran apertura frente a la diversidad de lugares y de las personas que encuentra en ese país. Su estilo misionero se caracteriza por una actitud extremadamente respetuosa en relación a la gente, cosa que en este período es más bien raro en otras expresiones o experiencias misioneras.

Demuestra su coraje en predicar el Evangelio, arriesgando la vida, en el campo de concentración de Auschwitz. Está movido por una ardiente y heroica caridad cristiana, tiene particularmente con los prisioneros y con los militares, una manera de actuar que es aun hoy fuente de inspiración sobretodo para las nuevas generaciones. Es necesario tener coraje para guiar una comunidad de alrededor de ochocientos frailes en Niepokalanów, con una organización extraordinaria, logrando armonizar

### Intención mensual de la MI para Septiembre

*Inmaculada, por favor intercede...*

para que los consagrados sean portadores de la luz de Cristo allí donde son más densas las tinieblas de la desconfianza y del desaliento.

la diversidad de cada uno, valorizándolos en el espíritu de la parábola de los talentos. Está atento a la necesidad de todos y trata de tener un diálogo sereno, constructivo y cargado de comprensión con todos los co-hermanos: su comportamiento, que nace evidentemente de su oración, se revela fecundo en clave apostólica. En todas estas acciones, el mártir polaco con el ejemplo y la palabra trata de iluminar a la sociedad en la que vive, destruida por la guerra y por el odio. Todo medio es útil para iluminar evangélicamente a la humanidad, según las significativas expresiones de Kolbe: «La prensa periódica y no periódica, la radio, la literatura, el arte, el teatro, el cine, la legislación, las cámaras de los diputados, los senados y las más diversas organizaciones que tuviesen por fin la destrucción de las organizaciones perversas y el cuidado del desarrollo pleno de los dones del Buen Dios de alma y cuerpo, concedidos a cada hombre, según las leyes de Dios, y así auxiliar a todos en todas las clases de la sociedad humana, en todas las condiciones y circunstancias, de la cuna hasta la tumba» (SK 200). Con todos los medios san Maximiliano evangeliza e invita, a hacer lo mismo, a los co-hermanos y a los milites de la Inmaculada. Es el eje oración-talentos a hacer posible un fructuoso apostolado, rico de conversiones. La predicación, el arte, los medios de comunicación: todo puede ser útil para la misión, siempre que funcione bien la continuidad entre la oración y la acción. Sólo así se alcanzará la santificación personal y la del prójimo. De este modo es posible para el santo formar una verdadera y propia escuela de evangelización. De la armonización entre la vida de unión con Dios y los talentos, nace la mejor utilización de los dones de la propia persona para el Reino: es la gran enseñanza del Padre Kolbe, místico y organizador.



## Para reflexionar

- ? ¿De qué manera puedo ser luz en el mundo en el que vivo?
- ? ¿Cuáles pueden ser mis iniciativas para que pueda ser también yo luz en medio de la oscuridad?
- ? ¿Cómo puedo ayudar al prójimo que vive en las tinieblas?
- ? ¿De qué manera puedo ser un signo de esperanza en la sociedad en la que vivo?
- ? ¿De qué manera puedo ayudar a los hermanos a huir de los momentos de desesperación?
- ? ¿Mi oración y mi acción están bien armonizadas para que pueda apoyar y sostener a los hermanos?
- ? ¿Tengo el coraje de anunciarle y de darle testimonio de Cristo a quien está sufriendo?

Fr. Raffaele Di Muro,  
Asistente de la MI Internacional  
*Traducido por Gabriela Rodríguez*

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