



## Militia Immaculata Okanagan Newsletter

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### *Day of Reflection on the Priesthood*

By Annette Leib

On September 18, 2010 at St. Pius X Church in Kelowna, BC we were blessed to have Fr. Patrick Greenough and Fr. Stephen McKinley, both from Marytown in Libertyville, Illinois, come to Kelowna and give an insightful and inspiring presentation on the priesthood of the ordained and the faithful. The day began with the Holy Mass. Afterwards; Fr. Patrick began the sessions with a brief talk on "What is Consecration?" This was followed by the Consecration to Jesus through Mary of seven new people along with the renewal of consecration by others.

Fr. Patrick then introduced the topic of the priesthood by asking the thought provoking question, "What is your image of a priest?" There are various answers to this question that range from very positive to quite negative. Many changes to the role of the priest have occurred over the centuries. Since the Vatican II Council the priest mingles more with the people. When he faces the people from the altar there is a closer relationship between the priest and the people. His identity as priest comes from both his relationship with God and the people. His priesthood is linked to the church in that he is servant and minister to the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church. To fulfill this role he is expected to be a man of prayer, to listen and to be led by the Holy Spirit, to pray the Divine Office regularly, to offer Mass, to catechize the faithful, to administer the Sacraments such as Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion, Holy Matrimony, the Sacrament of the Sick and to perform liturgical ceremonies.

The origin of the divine calling of the ordained priesthood comes from the mystery of Easter, the Holy Eucharist. Christ works through the hands of a priest, sinner or saint, every day at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. God always responds to the words of Consecration changing the bread and wine into His Body and Blood. This is a very high honour and dignity conferred upon the priest. For this reason the priest is to be held in reverence for the sake of God and not for himself. It is the gift that matters, not the person.

Fr. Patrick described the every day reality of being a priest with its many demands and responsibilities. He has to be a bridge builder, a mediator, a counselor, a healer, etc. He is a father of the spiritual realm. He has to be another Christ of flesh and blood in all things and in every situation. He carries the heavy burden of the cross as he fulfills his role knowing his deficiencies and sinfulness.

Fr. McKinley spoke on the common priesthood of the ordained and the laity. Both are called to holiness and to help minister in the whole Christian community. Our life with Christ always involves community, not just a 'Jesus and I mentality'. By offering up our daily sacrifices and uniting those with Christ's sufferings we help fulfill our priesthood. It is only the priest who offers up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as he is ordained through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to do this.

Fr. Patrick spoke on the priesthood of St. Maximilian Kolbe and how he imitated Christ throughout his life. He carried his cross all the way to Calvary when he gave up his life for another prisoner in the starvation bunkers in Auschwitz. Just as Mary stood at the cross of her Son, she stood by Fr. Kolbe as he carried his cross to the end. Fr. Kolbe was another Christ by word and by example. The day of recollection ended with Benediction.

### *What Is Consecration and How Do You Prepare For It?*

By Marlene Hughes & Colleen Finlon

Consecration to Jesus through the heart of Our Lady is an offering of our complete selves to her for our own sanctification and to become instruments for the coming of the Kingdom of Jesus in the whole world. Mother and Son are not separated by time and space. They are both always present to us at the same time and Our Lady is always leading us to her Son. It is a beautiful and profound way to heaven...to becoming holy. It is a perfect devotion done with our heart because it conforms, unites and consecrates us to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. We consecrate because we love Our Lady, our model, and we desire to be close to her and to Jesus. By a special grace she gives us her heart in exchange. She is the Immaculate one. When she gives us her heart this is the key to peace to unity. The heart of her mission is to bring all hearts to unity that as Jesus said "all may be one" not to be right or to be better but to belong to God. We find solidarity in her. We find family in her. We find our sense of direction. In Baptism we are already consecrated. Now we say yes in a special way to the Immaculata, to belong to her, to find holiness so that it burns in our hearts. Love is the basis of consecration. Jesus' last will and testament from the cross was "HERE IS YOUR MOTHER." As Pope John Paul II said, "a gift that Christ personally gave to us all." Mary is filled with love and waiting for us. Preparing a foundation for consecration is very simple. We prepare as we would for an important visitor. We put ourselves in order, we freshen, we make room. We prepare for a feast, an interior feast of peace, joy, love and holiness.

#### **How to Prepare for Consecration**

1. By renouncing evil and receiving the grace of the Sacrament of Confession as often as necessary.
  2. By attending Holy Mass as frequently as possible we receive grace and also by the Spiritual Communion we make as we call on Him to come spiritually into our hearts.
  3. Saying the Holy Rosary, praying with our hearts and picturing ourselves there in the mysteries.
  4. Reading the Holy Bible, small passages at random, or the Psalms or the Song of Songs or the Gospels.
  5. Fasting from TV, certain foods, gossiping etc. Fasting is a tradition in our faith and it makes room for God to work, to enter. Our Lady would have fasted in her life.
  6. St. Maximilian used the Miraculous Medal Prayer to convert everyone. '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 the holy Church and those recommended to you.'
  7. Find an approved Marian consecration guide book. Try the *Total Consecration to Mary: Spirituality and Nine-Day Novena* by Fr. Anselm Romb, OFM CONV., Marytown Press. It is available at Loaves & Fishes Book Store in Kelowna.
- Will you come to her, our Mother?  
Will you allow her to carry you?  
Will you let her bring you to Jesus?  
Will you accept her heart in exchange?  
The gifts she brings are from heaven. Who could refuse?

*Let December 8th be a day of regeneration for our souls, a renewal of zeal for furthering the heavenly and earthly kingdom of the most loving Queen. - St. Maximilian Kolbe*

### *MI Youth Summer Retreat*

By Tyler Worthing

Just over one and a half years ago in the summer of 2009, I departed from Kelowna International Airport for Seattle Washington to attend the Militia Immaculata's Summer Youth Retreat. Travelling alone at the age of 16 to another country for my first summer camp, I was a little unsure of what to expect. But from the time I stepped off the plane to meet my ride and until my return home four days later I found myself nothing but welcomed, amazed and wearing an ear to ear smile (as is my norm) the whole time. The retreat has had a lasting impression on me, on my memory and on my faith; an experience that has truly been one of a kind both years I have been able to go. I hope you will enjoy this glimpse of my experience at the MI Summer Youth Camp.

Arriving at the retreat center it was easy to notice the two full sports fields, chapel with the Blessed Sacrament, multiple cabins, cafeteria, and sheltered basketball courts surrounded

by forest alongside a small lake. Equally impressive was the food, mostly all home-made and ranging from pizza, to tacos, to pancakes including dessert every night. When I attended, the center housed, fed and entertained over 100 Catholic youth for the duration of the retreat.

What I found more amazing however, was the youth, who in the day would play soccer, volleyball or canoe, while at night would pray the rosary, attend Adoration or adapt the message of Pope Benedict's letter to young people into a skit. To see so many other young Catholics living their faith was equally inspiring for both leaders and youth. Over the retreat we were able to listen to many relevant talks from leaders, religious sisters, priests and guests on many aspects of being Catholic. One of the best memories I have from the retreat took place just afterwards while waiting for my ride to the airport at the home of a family hosting the leaders. Before arriving word had gotten out that someone's (my) 17<sup>th</sup> birthday was tomorrow, and so, I arrived to cake, singing and decorations. To me, it was a good example of how genuine and awesome I found the leaders to be. God willing you may know exactly where to find me late next June.

### ***A Young Prisoner of Auschwitz***

From *A Man For Others*, by Patricia Treece, Marytown Press  
Sigmund Gorson lived to tell what Kolbe's witness to God's love meant to him.

"...And that is how Kolbe found me wandering around, so to speak, looking for someone to connect with. He was like an angel to me. Like a mother hen, he took me in his arms. He used to wipe away my tears. I believe in God more since that time. Because of the death of my parents I had been asking, 'Where is God?' and had lost faith. Kolbe gave me that faith back... He knew I was a Jewish boy. That made no difference. His heart was bigger than persons - that is, whether they were Jewish, Catholic or whatever. He loved everyone. He dispensed love and nothing but love."

### ***MI Okanagan Villages***

Our MI Okanagan Villages continue to meet on a regular basis that varies from every week to every month. Some follow the format of: invocation to the Holy Spirit - Scripture reading - discussion on the consecration - focus on a day in the life of Mary, what was her life like? - Intentions and the Rosary - prayer for the family followed by hospitality. One village meets at a grotto by a lake having candlelight vigils at which time they experience a powerful presence of Our Lady. Another village that meets on a regular basis focuses on a reading on St. Maximilian followed by a discussion. They experience a powerful presence of Jesus and Mary at their gatherings. Some villages follow the MI Village Meeting Format reading passages from the book called *Will to Love: Reflections for Daily Living* by St. Kolbe by Marytown Press, followed by discussion and intercession. Also enjoyed by some is the DVD entitled *Maximilian - Saint of Auschwitz*. What is evident for all of the villages is an experience of blessing and growth in the presence of Jesus and Mary. If you have made your consecration and would like to join an MI village, contact Annette at 250-496-5654.

### ***Saint Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr of Charity***

From the *MI Catechism*, Marytown Press, Libertyville, IL.

#### **4. WHAT EVENTS IN KOLBE'S YOUTH CHANGED HIS LIFE?**

About age ten, after being reprimanded by his mother, Raymond began spending more time in prayer, insistently asking Mary, "What is to become of me?" A few days later, Mary appeared to him at his parish church, St. Matthew's in Pabianice. She offered him two crowns, a white one signifying purity, a red one signifying martyrdom. When she asked which one he wanted, he answered "both." Mary smiled, nodded her approval and departed.

#### **5. HOW DID ST. MAXIMILIAN BECOME A FRANCISCAN PRIEST?**

Although Raymond and Francis together entered the Conventual Franciscan minor seminary in Lwow, Francis did not remain in the Order and eventually married. Later Kolbe's younger brother Joseph entered the Order, taking the name of Alphonse. He worked with St. Maximilian at Niepokalanow, and died suddenly in 1931. In 1910 Raymond entered the

novitiate in Lwow, taking the name, Maximilian.

At one point during his novitiate year he was on the verge of leaving the Order, believing Our Lady was calling him to be a "soldier of God" in the military. But a visit from his mother renewed his determination to be a religious, and he never again questioned his vocation. In 1912 while in simple vows, he was sent to the Order's Seraphic College in Rome for his priestly studies. St. Maximilian earned doctorates in philosophy (1915) and theology (1919) by the age of twenty-five.



St. Maximilian's Breviary and a piece of barbed wire from Auschwitz preserved in the Chapel at Marytown. Photo by Colleen Finlon

### ***MI Mass***

Just a reminder that we will continue with our MI Mass on the second Thursday of every month, starting at 7 pm in the Immaculate Conception Church in Kelowna unless otherwise indicated in the bulletins. We will also continue with Confession before Mass starting at 6 pm and praying the Rosary at 6:30 pm. MI Mass is always followed by a reception in the parish hall. We look forward to seeing you attend and all are welcome.

### ***Membership Fees***

You have probably received the recent letter concerning the membership fee for the Militia Immaculata. Please be assured that you are still a member with or without the fee. The only difference is that paid members are allowed to vote for the election of officers under the bylaws for a charitable organization. MI Okanagan was advised to request membership fees to offset the possibility of any complications arising in the future from Revenue Canada for the issuing of tax receipts. We have always complied closely with their regulations and will continue to do so. The revenue from the minimal annual fee of \$10/person or \$15/family will assist with operating expenses incurred throughout the year. Please note that the fee is optional. Makes cheques payable to MI Okanagan and give to Jerry Dusik.

### ***Militia Immaculata Okanagan Executive***

Father Sebastian Puthenpura	Spiritual Director
Annette Leib	Coordinator
Eileen Collins	Assistant coordinator
Jerry Dusik	Treasurer
Colleen Finlon	Newsletter

For more information on the MI Okanagan phone 250-496-5654 or 250-862-8115.

