

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 24

Cain and Abel



In order to understand the martyrdom that St. Maximilian experienced in Auschwitz it is necessary to first understand the historical roots that led to it. Roots that go back centuries and continue to spread and grow even today from Rwanda to Kosovo to the killing fields in Cambodia, to wherever people of a different race, creed and culture are persecuted and rejected.

Roots that go back to Cain and Abel and Original Sin where jealousy, pride and fratricide began.

And continue even to this day in the human heart.

The only solution is not politics but Christ.

For only in Christ is there "no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for all are one in Christ." Gal. 3:28

In order to understand the martyrdom of Maximilian and the Holocaust one must begin with oneself.

Children begin to see that others are different from them, physically, racially, culturally, and religiously.

This can lead to

Appreciation or rejection.

Acceptance or bullying.

Apathy or empathy.

These attitudes then transfer to adulthood and continue to be expressed in other forms.

St. Maximilian experienced what it meant to be a minority as he lived in occupied Poland where Russian passports were required, Russian was taught in schools, the calendar was Russian and the official Church was Orthodox, all in order to make people think and act like Russians.

St Maximilian embraced other cultures as he studied in Italy and was a missionary in Japan.

Maximilian was a man who experienced and embraced people of different race, culture and religion with a spirit of respect when he disagreed and love for all.

Prayer : Heavenly Father, the color of your skin is black, brown, yellow, red and white for we are all made in your image and likeness. Help us to see your face in all we meet today. Amen.

Question and Meditations :

1. Did I see or experience bullying or rejection as a child?
2. How did it affect me and how did I respond?
3. Who do I know that is different from me racially, culturally or religiously?
4. What has been my experience of people who are different than me racially, culturally or religiously?
5. How can I break down stereotypes that divide?
6. Am I ever afraid of people who are different from me racially, culturally or religiously and how do I respond to that fear?
7. How is Jesus a part of every race and culture?