

## ***Consecration and St Maximilian Kolbe***

Talk for MI Summerside Village, P.E.I. – July 2010 – ***By Fr. Brad Sweet***

“St Maximilian Kolbe rooted his Marian spirituality in the traditional principles of Consecration”<sup>i</sup>. St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort especially espoused this and there are parallels in the formulae of consecration with that of St Maximilian Kolbe. The one written by Kolbe and used by those wishing to adhere to the MI is profound in its meaning for the individual as the person unites themselves with Mary to fulfil the will of God in his or her life and the work He has chosen for each person, just as he chose Mary to be the mother of the Saviour.

It is essential to...the Militia Immaculata movement to become ever more fully the Immaculata’s property”<sup>ii</sup>. It is being her property that distinguishes the MI movement from all others. While de Montfort spoke of slaves of the Immaculate, Kolbe spoke of property, which has no will of its own<sup>iii</sup>, but only that of the owner.

The person who is truly consecrated to the Immaculate to this extent, in being her property, cannot fail to exert an influence on the milieu surrounding him or her<sup>iv</sup>. Why do we do this; so that we can extend the kingdom of God on earth and rescue the strayed and indifferent souls<sup>v</sup>. St Maximilian Kolbe says that this sort of person will sacrifice a great deal at his or her own expense; at the cost of their labour and him or her self to the last drop of blood<sup>vi</sup>. We become more and more the property of the Immaculata’s if we unite ourselves to her and her cause. She gave birth to the Son of Man to save our fallen world. We are new creatures through his Passion and Resurrection as St Paul says<sup>vii</sup>. And so we can place ourselves under the protective banner of Our Lady and work with her and so bring about the reign of the Sacred Heart as requested.

St Louis de Montfort said we could reach sanctity through our devotion to Our Lady who is the most perfect model of holiness and obedience and a rich source of divine graces<sup>viii</sup>. To live, work, suffer and even die for the Immaculata carries responsibilities:

Liturgy:	prayer
Communion:	charity
Ministry: service	
Martyrdom: testimony	

These four then lead to our identity as a Christian: *consecration, living, giving testimony, evangelizing*. (I will speak more about these during the coming months during the meetings as St Maximilian saw them lived out). We need the intercession of St Maximilian, Our Lady’s mediation and the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can reach the heights of sanctity, which we are asked for and so be able to listen and respond to the needs of those around us in these four identities. Through the consecration to the Immaculate in the MI we work *for* her and *with* her for the evangelization of the whole world<sup>ix</sup>.

St Maximilian Kolbe said in his personal *Rule of Life* that “your rule is obedience, the will of God through the Immaculate; you are an instrument in her hand; therefore, do only what she wishes”<sup>x</sup>. John Paul II said, “there is no better way to approach her son than through her”<sup>xi</sup>, St Maximilian Kolbe “made unrestricted consecration to our Lady the essential condition for achieving the scope of the MI”<sup>xii</sup>.

The General Statutes of the MI, article 3, explain that: “the Militia essentially intends to promote the extension of the Reign of Christ in the world through the action of the Immaculata, encouraging all Christians...to place themselves at her service in the mission that she has as Mother of the Church”<sup>xiii</sup>. Through the MI we seek with the help of Our Lady three things only: the conversion of all, the sanctification of all people and in obtaining the greatest possible glory for the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity<sup>xiv</sup>.

All members of the MI are aware of always and everywhere being missionaries, and are such to the extent to which they live the union with Christ Redeemer after the example of Mary<sup>xv</sup>. St Maximilian Kolbe wrote: “The ideal of every member of the MI is to be the servant and child of the Immaculate, and this out of love, as a slave, as her property and possession, irrevocably and forever”<sup>xvi</sup>.

In order to reach this union with Christ and to be agents in the salvation of the world, we unite ourselves with the work of the MI and live a consecrated life with Our Lady Immaculate because “Humanity will be happy only when the Immaculata will reign over the whole earth”<sup>xvii</sup>. The apostolates can be individual or as a group.

In article 19 of the General Statutes of the MI, it states that in belonging to the MI it is essential to have “total entrusting, that is, the consecration of oneself to the Immaculate: body and soul, human abilities and spiritual gifts”<sup>xviii</sup>. St Maximilian said, “He who has known, loved and consecrated himself entirely to Mary Immaculate, so that nothing remains for himself, and who desires to become more and more her own in every way, will also try to make others love her in similar devotion and will omit no means thereto”<sup>xix</sup>.

So our goal in becoming consecrated as members of the MI is to seek:

1. **conversion** of sinners and non-believers beginning with ourselves;
2. **growth** of all in holiness;
3. **reparation** for sin and building up the kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus □through consecration to Mary, and participation in the Mass, Holy Communion and □Eucharistic Adoration.

By joining a local group, we have the advantage of mutual support, prayers, and monthly formation. A great many members of the MI (4 million around the world) are MI-1 members meaning that they live out their consecration alone working for the building of the kingdom in their areas of apostolate on their own. In our case, in the Diocese of Charlottetown, we have a Village here in Summerside, the only village east of Montréal in Canada. We are MI-2, which means we can support each other in our consecration, prayers and apostolates on a monthly basis or more frequently as requested. Should there ever be religious orders that could come to the diocese based on the MI, and there are already a number of them including secular institutes of religious life and new Franciscan orders, they become MI-3.

So Consecration, total consecration denotes making something or someone “holy” and usable only by God – which is what consecration to Mary is all about. In a letter from Shanghai, China, Kolbe instructed a member of the City of Mary in Poland who wondered what devotion to Mary really was all about in the MI. In the letter Kolbe states: “Consecration to the Immaculate...can be more or less perfect. Because total consecration is made in the spirit of the MI to the degree, it becomes a consecration without limits, and is broad and deep. Since we belong entirely to the Immaculate, let us do all within our power to convert and sanctify souls; it is the Immaculate herself who works through our mediation”<sup>xx</sup>.

Therefore, we need to strive towards holiness in our lives and witness to it so that we can lead others to the Immaculate and through her to the Sacred Heart. If each one of us seeks to serve the Immaculate faithfully, the less we should seek ourselves and our own satisfaction<sup>xxi</sup>.

St Maximilian said “First, give yourself over entirely to your own sanctification, and so you will be able to give yourself entirely to the sanctification of others”<sup>xxii</sup>. In order to perform the duties and responsibilities of the life required to serve Our Lady in the MI, St Maximilian emphasised that there was a need for a profound interior life for the apostolate<sup>xxiii</sup>, the one each of us has chosen or been given. “If you truly love Jesus, then first of all you desire to do his will, and hence to receive grace in the manner ordained by him”<sup>xxiv</sup>.

All of this work then, consecration and apostolates, is for one goal: the Glory of God and the salvation of souls. Salvation, then, and the most perfect sanctification of the greatest number of souls

redeemed by Jesus at the costly price of his death on the Cross must be our lives' sublime ideal: all this to bring the greatest joy to the Sacred Heart of Jesus<sup>xxv</sup>. It is the maximum glory of God through the salvation and most perfect sanctification of oneself and others<sup>xxvi</sup>.

After consecration, the sanctification of the individual and others will come through devotion to the Most Blessed Sacrament; and through this devotion and practice of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, we can receive many graces for the conversion and sanctification of souls. The MI values this as one of the most important means for achieving its own goals<sup>xxvii</sup>. And further, on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, it is the custom for members of the MI to make an examination of conscience covering the past year to see whether, through the Immaculate, they have drawn closer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, have conversed in greater familiarity with Jesus in the tabernacle and even more after having received him in Holy Communion<sup>xxviii</sup>.

A soul consecrated to the Immaculate should follow in full freedom the inclination of his heart and draw closer with confidence both to the Tabernacle and to the Cross-, and to the most blessed Trinity, for such a soul does not approach alone, but together with Mary Immaculate<sup>xxix</sup>. For the MI St Maximilian had this ideal: "To conquer hearts for the Immaculate with love and through her for the divine heart of Jesus and ultimately for the heavenly Father<sup>xxx</sup>; it is really to attract souls to Christ through the Immaculate and our work for her that is the end of all of this.

St Maximilian said, in an article concerning the MI itself, in 1936, in order to be consecrated, one should "be hers without any restriction, irrevocably and forever hers; to become ever more totally hers, more perfectly hers, more like her, more one with her...whoever becomes her possession in an increasingly perfect manner, in this fashion will exercise an ever greater influence in the milieu in which he is placed and will spur others on to know the Immaculata ever more perfectly, to love her more ardently, to draw closer to her. A soul of this kind, totally possessed by the Immaculata, will conquer an increasing number of souls for her, using every legitimate means, and will become her knight, a soldier of the Immaculata!"<sup>xxxi</sup>.

So with Consecration to Our Lady, in the formula of St Maximilian Kolbe, we become her property first, then through spiritual growth as outlined here, we become her knight in the "Crusade of the Immaculate" as it is called in the United Kingdom.

We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

*New religious movements and orders from the MI:*

- Father Kolbe Missionaries, California (women)
- (<http://fkminusa.podbean.com/> pod cast of formation each month)
- Father Kolbe Missionaries, Brazil (men)
- Daughters of the Immaculata
- Diplomatic Society of St Gabriel
- The Medical Missionaries of the MI
- Sisters Minor of Mary Immaculate
- Father Kolbe Volunteers of the Immaculata

## References

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- <sup>i</sup> Luigi Faccenda, *One More Gift; Total Consecration to the Immaculata According to the Spirituality of St Maximilian Kolbe*, West Covina: Immaculata Press, 1990: 51.
- <sup>ii</sup> *Ibid.*: 51.
- <sup>iii</sup> Anselm Romb, “The Formula of Total Consecration and its Meaning for a Knight: Introduction”, *The Writings of St Maximilian M. Kolbe, OFM Conv., The Kolbe Reader*, Libertyville: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1987: 158.
- <sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*: 159.
- <sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*: 159.
- <sup>vi</sup> *Ibid.*: 160.
- <sup>vii</sup> 2 Corinthians 5: 17.
- <sup>viii</sup> Anselm Romb, “St Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort”, *The Writings of St Maximilian M. Kolbe, OFM Conv., The Kolbe Reader*, Libertyville: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1987: 38.
- <sup>ix</sup> Luigi Faccenda, *One More Gift; Total Consecration to the Immaculata According to the Spirituality of St Maximilian Kolbe*, West Covina: Immaculata Press, 1990: 47.
- <sup>x</sup> Jerzy Domanski, *For The Life Of The World: St Maximilian Kolbe and the Eucharist*, New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 1999: 37.
- <sup>xi</sup> *Ibid.*: 36.
- <sup>xii</sup> *Ibid.*: 36.
- <sup>xiii</sup> *General Statutes*, Militia of the Immaculate, article 3.
- <sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*: article 4.
- <sup>xv</sup> *Ibid.*: article 15.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Anselm Romb, *Total Consecration to Mary: The Theology and History of Marian Consecration with a Nine-Day Preparation, in the Spirit of St Maximilian Kolbe*, Libertyville: Marytown Press, 2006: 13.
- <sup>xvii</sup> St Maximilian Kolbe, *Aim Higher! Spiritual and Marian Reflections of St Maximilian Kolbe*, Libertyville: Marytown Press, 2007: 124.
- <sup>xviii</sup> *General Statutes*, Militia of the Immaculate, article 19.
- <sup>xix</sup> St Maximilian Kolbe quoted by the Sisters Minor of Mary Immaculate [<http://sistersminormi.org/contact-us-resources.html>]
- <sup>xx</sup> *Letter*, 12 April 1933: M. Kolbe to A. Vivoda.
- <sup>xxi</sup> *Letter*, [na]1941: M. Kolbe to A. Stepniewski.

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<sup>xxii</sup> SK II, 971: 654; Pisma V: 61

<sup>xxiii</sup> Jerzy Domanski, *For the Life of the World: St Maximilian and the Eucharist*, New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 1999: 35.

<sup>xxiv</sup> SK II, 643.

<sup>xxv</sup> SK I, 25: 44.

<sup>xxvi</sup> SK II, 971: 653.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Jerzy Domanski, 1999: 134.

<sup>xxviii</sup> SK III, 1233: 543.

<sup>xxix</sup> SK III, 1301: 706.

<sup>xxx</sup> SK III, 1237: 549.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Maximilian Kolbe, "On the MI", December 1936.