

75th. Anniversary of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 2. August 21-28

The Martyrdom of Country :

In the map, one can see the countries of Europe before and after World War I.



When Maximilian was born Poland did not exist. It had been carved up by Russia, Germany and Austria. How ironic that at the time of his death, Poland once again did not exist as it had been invaded and conquered by Germany and later Russia would invade it once again.

Maximilian's first act of martyrdom therefore was being without a country.

This wounded him deeply as he was even willing to give up his vocation as a priest in order to restore the sovereignty of Poland. The loss of Poland to the Nazis in World War II, therefore was nothing new to Kolbe. He had already experienced it as a child. Having lived under Russian rule, he had a Russian Passport, studied Russian in school, followed the Russian calendar and was told to think like a Russian. For a man who loved his Polish language, Culture and Catholic heritage this was clearly a martyrdom. Not only was Maximilian willing to give up his vocation as a Franciscan and a priest to restore his beloved Poland, he was willing to give up his life. So at an early age, he was contemplating martyrdom. Not necessarily as a martyr for Christ but for Poland. The Immaculata was to later take his desire to be a martyr for Poland and turn it into one for Christ!

Imagine your country no longer existed. That it had been conquered not by friends but by a hostile enemy. Signs begin to appear in a foreign

language. News reports and news papers are now being reported in a different language. Your religion, culture, language and traditions are now being changed, oppressed, persecuted and even wiped out. This is the initial martyrdom that Kolbe experienced. It is also a martyrdom that many people experience in the world today as a result of war, genocide and terrorism. Each person, each nation, each culture, each race, each religion deserves respect and dignity. May the initial martyrdom of Maximilian who lived at a time when this was not possible remind and awaken all peoples to the suffering of others who are experiencing this martyrdom today. Take time to reflect upon who and where in the world this type of martyrdom is taking place and pray for them, speak for them, do penance for them to ease their suffering and pain.

Prayer :

O Lady of Fatima, you warned that many nations would disappear from the face of the earth, protect our nation O Blessed Virgin and make it a place of Peace and Justice and Prosperity for people of every language, race and creed. Amen.

Meditations and Questions

1. What does my country mean to me?
2. What are the values on which a country should be founded?
3. What values are missing in my country?
4. How like St. Maximilian can I help restore my country?
5. How do I live and practice my citizenship?
6. What countries are struggling to survive?

God bless,