

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 48

I am a Catholic Priest!



Maximilian Kolbe is many things to many people. He is a saint, martyr, missionary, theologian, and publisher.

But how did St. Maximilian see himself?

As a Catholic Priest!

These were the last known recorded words of St. Maximilian.

When he stepped out of line at Auschwitz, the commandant asked him who he was.

Maximilian could have said that he was the founder of Niepekalanow, the largest Franciscan friary in the world or that he was the editor of one of the largest publishing houses in Poland, if not Europe.

Instead he said that he was a Catholic Priest.

But what is a priest?

To know who and what a priest is one must reflect upon Christ the High Priest from whom all priesthood flows.

Jesus is the High Priest,
Who emptied Himself Phil.2:7,
Who laid down His life Jn. 15:13
Who washes the feet of others Jn. 13:5
Who is the Suffering Servant Is. 53
Who is Obedient unto death Phil. 2:8
Who reveals the Father Mt. 11:27
Who gives His Body and Blood Lk. 22:19-20
Who is the Good Shepherd Jn. 10:11

This is what it means to be "in Persona Christi",
To live and move and act as another Christ.

As St. Paul said, "It is no longer I who lives but Christ Who lives in me." Gal. 2:20

When St. Maximilian stepped forward in Auschwitz and said,
"I am a Catholic Priest."
He was no longer Maximilian Kolbe.
Like St. Paul he had died to himself,
It was now Christ Who was living in him.
It was Christ Who was stepping forward.
It was Christ Who was taking the place of another prisoner.
It was Christ Who was going down into the starvation bunker.
It was Christ Who was being stripped and starved.

Where was God in the Holocaust?

He was in the starvation bunker in Auschwitz in the person of Maximilian laying down His life for another just as He had done 2000 years ago on Calvary.

By saying that he was a Catholic priest, Maximilian most perfectly reflected the priesthood of Christ and not only reflected it but became another Christ not just in word but in deed.

Maximilian had now become Crucified with Christ and he no longer lived, but Christ lived in him and just as Christ loved him and gave up His life for him so Maximilian was willing to do the same for another. Gal. 2:20

Prayer : O Jesus, the Great High Priest, intercede with Your Father that all ordained priests may imitate Your Priesthood more perfectly at the altar and in the celebration of the Sacraments and May the Priesthood of the Faithful received in Baptism consecrate all the world to the praise and glory of Your Most Holy Name.

Questions and Mediations

1. How is Jesus the Great High Priest? Heb. 3:1
2. What is the ordained priesthood? Acts 14:23, Rom. 15:16, Titus 1:5
3. What is the priesthood of all Believers? 1Pet. 2:5-9
4. How do I live my priesthood?

