

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 49



The Other Nine

When one prisoner escaped from Auschwitz, 10 were chosen to go down and die in the starvation bunker.

When Francis Gajowinczek was chosen, Fr. Maximilian Kolbe stepped forward and offered to take his place.

But what about the other nine?
Who were they?

They represent all of the faceless, nameless, and forgotten ones who died in Auschwitz; Who were gassed, hung, starved, shot, and cremated and whose ashes were spread to the wind without a grave or marker or prayer.

St. Maximilian not only stepped forward to take the place of one prisoner.
He stepped forward so that he could be with the other nine.
So that they would not be alone.

To Maximilian, they were not nameless.
They were human beings, unique and important;
Made in the image of God.
And so He became the presence of God in the starvation bunker.

Reminding them that they were not forgotten.
That they were precious and valuable enough to die with them and for them.

We may never know who the other nine were, but through Maximilian Kolbe they not only did not die alone but they will not be forgotten.

Maximilian represents all of the men and women in the world who die nameless, faceless and forgotten through genocide, war and violence.

Just as Maximilian went down into the starvation bunker to be with the other nine, so he stands with all the other nameless, faceless and forgotten ones in the world so that they too may know they are not alone.

Prayer : O God who casts down the mighty and lifts up the lowly, shine your face upon the faceless, call out to the nameless and remember those whom the world has forgotten. Amen

Mediations and Questions :

1. Who are the nameless, the faceless and the forgotten around me?
2. How can I reach out to them as did Maximilian?