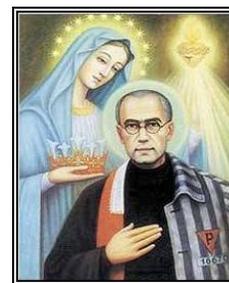




## Poverty *-Abandonment in God*



Dear MI Members and Friends,

In a meeting with seminarians and men and women novices from all over the world in Rome, Pope Francis said: “...but I tell you, it truly grieves me to see a priest or a sister with the latest model of a car: but this can't be! It can't be. You think: “so do we now have to go by bicycle, Father? Bicycles are good! Mons. Alfred rides a bicycle. He goes by bike. I think that cars are necessary because there is so much work to be done, and also in order to get about... but choose a more humble car! And if you like the beautiful one, only think of all the children who are dying of hunger. That's all! Joy is not born from, does not come from, things we possess!” (Paul VI Audience Hall, Saturday, July 6, 2013). Regarding “our” Maximilian, we can say that his poverty is equal to that of St. Francis. They both think and lived this evangelical counsel from the perspective of full reliance upon God's providence.

Being poor is the capital on which the two saints trusted, assured that the Almighty would bless the intentions which he himself inspired. Referring to his father and founder, Father Kolbe wanted the friars to dwell in simple, poor buildings, and to use what was given, not for their personal use, but for those who suffer from any kind of poverty, especially the spiritually poor.

The Immaculate, with her caring presence and intercession, allows her children to achieve extraordinary apostolic goals. We see this in the birth and spread of the Militia of the Immaculata, the Knight, and the City of the Immaculate, expressions of high-profile evangelical apostolate and of considerable expansion. They were built upon the unconditional trust in the Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Then there is personal poverty which must be pursued in the most perfect and authentic way possible. The funds which the Almighty consents us to administer are intended for spreading the Word. The religious is called to a detachment, indicative of his/her fulfillment and conviction in following Christ. St. Maximilian believed that you have to have “*Mary Immaculate as the goal and poverty as the capital: these are two things that Niepokalanów cannot, at any point, abandon. Without this goal it would cease to be Niepokalanów, it would become unfaithful to its mission. Without poverty and dependence upon the Providence of God there is no place for talk of progress, offensive*” (Writing of SMK 299).

The great works of God are born and develop from the full abandonment in his hands. Trust and poverty go hand in hand and are the basis of conformity to the poor Christ and apostolic success, which takes on the maximum missionary thrust.

The simple style of the friar and the MI member is aimed at reaching the

### MI Monthly Intention

*Immaculata, please intercede...*

*that, trusting in God's help, Lent may be a favorable time for embracing a lifestyle of simplicity and solidarity with the less fortunate.*

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The Fr. Kolbe Missionaries, present and working in the shadows of Auschwitz, each 14<sup>th</sup> of the month will take your petitions to the cell of St. Maximilian Kolbe where they pray the chaplet of St. Maximilian.

<http://www.kolbemission.org/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/6956>

### **LENTEN MESSAGE OF OUR HOLY FATHER FRANCIS 2014**

*He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich  
(cf. 2 Cor 8:9)*

[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/francesco/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco\\_20131226\\_messa\\_ggio-quaresima2014\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20131226_messa_ggio-quaresima2014_en.html)

Kingdom. The unconditional trust in the love and providential action of God is the fundamental guideline to walk toward eternal life and to witness to the world the beauty of this way. It is important, therefore, to limit to the maximum personal needs, such as housing, clothing, and food and focus on ones mission, free and consistent. What matters is to answer the call to the apostolate in view of God's Kingdom.

Be poor, even when you use the most powerful means to spread the Gospel and love of the Immaculate, provided that you do not lessen your personal sobriety, the fruit of the unconditional gift of one's life to the Lord. It is necessary to have the most modern means for the apostolate and to preserve a humble and simple lifestyle. This will help ensure fidelity in following and abandonment in God's providence and plan, with full trust that his assistance will never be lacking.

Father Kolbe, remaining in line with the poverty desired by St. Francis and handed down in the Franciscan tradition, contributes innovative ways to practice it. The life of a religious is to be poor and simple, always seeking the presence and will of God. However, to preach the Gospel and the coming of the Kingdom one must give everything they have and, if Providence permits, use all possible resources for the apostolate so that it is effective and *avant garde*. The Friar Minor's style is marked by the essential. The missionary dimension is enriched in the best possible way by the physical and economic strengths of the religious community. The role of Mary is really important for anyone who

wants to be poor, because *"everything that is ours belongs to her (our total consecration). We are called to a perfect poverty and the use of things only as they are necessary and sufficient to reach the end"* (Writings of SMK 486). The Immaculata is, therefore, a point of reference for all who are called to follow the Lord in a life of poverty. When the believer trusts her, he/she lets himself/herself be guided in relation to the use of material goods.

-Fr. Raffaele Di Muro,  
MI International Assistant

*Translated by Ann O'Donnell*



#### **For Reflection**

- † *Detachment from material goods and the quest for eternal ones represent a major challenge for every believer. At what point is your path to sobriety of living and simplicity?*
- † *Faith leads me to believe that God will work great things in me, without this depending on my possessions. Confident abandonment in the Lord and in the Immaculate enabled Fr. Kolbe to realize great works, even though he lived in poverty. How does his example speak to your heart?*
- † *To live simply allows me to be sensitive towards the poor. Do I welcome the invitation of the Pope who urges us to be attentive to the needs of others?*



First stages of the building of Niepokalanów.  
Left - the chapel.