

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 4. September 4 - 11

The Martyrdom of Leaving Home :

Maximilian, or Raymond as he was baptized or Mundek as his parents called him, heard the Conventual Franciscan Provincial preach about St. Francis. And how he sought to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, by denying himself and taking up his cross. Mt. 16:24. Raymond, felt that same desire to deny himself and take up his cross. Raymond however was only a boy of 13 years. There were no Franciscan seminaries in his hometown which was ruled by the Russians. He would have to leave his parents and go to the Franciscan seminary in Austrian controlled Poland 385 miles away. With tears in their eyes and one last embrace Raymond boarded the train for the seminary knowing that he would not see his mother or father's face everyday, nor hear their voice or kiss their cheek. As the train pulled away he could still hear his "Mamusia" say, "The Holy Mother will never desert you, Mundek, trust in her, call upon her, love her for she your heavenly Mamusia!" When he reached the border, because they had no passports, he had to climb into the back of a farmer's wagon and hide under the scratchy hay in order to cross the border. And as he did, he left his home, his mother and father and his country behind, a child of only 13 years.

The picture is of the home where Maximilian was born Jan. 8,1894 in Zdunska Wola, Poland.



Prayer : O Lord Jesus, you taught that no one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of Heaven. As Maximilian set his heart on being a priest and left family and homeland behind, may we have the same courage to leave our sins behind and follow wherever you lead.

Meditations and Questions

1. What was it like for Raymond to leave his family and homeland to go to the seminary?
2. WHO are we willing to leave behind to follow Christ?
3. WHAT are we willing to leave behind to follow Christ?