



Mission of the Immaculata Okanagan

NEWSLETTER December, 2018

Dear MI members,

In the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe to St. Juan Diego, the Blessed Mother revealed herself to be the Mother of all peoples. In fact when St. Juan Diego approached the Bishop of Mexico during that time, he said that the lady would like to build a church there so that her children may experience her love. Fast track to the 21st century, the basilica of our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico is frequented by millions of people each year. People from different parts of the world pay their homage to this Mother.

Our Blessed Mother is indeed a refuge for all of us. Last October 23 to 28, I was privileged to be part of a group and were able to visit the basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City. It was my first time to be in Mexico and of course, my first time to visit Our Blessed Mother of Guadalupe. It was a splendid experience for I saw right before my eyes, the *tilma* of St. Juan Diego where the image of Our Lady is printed. The very sight of the image of our Lady reveals her love for her children. It was through her apparition that conversion in Mexico happened in droves over half a millennia ago.

What I took from that pilgrimage is really a realization that our Lady is indeed looking after her children. She wants us all to be led to her son Jesus Christ. It is amazing to see that just outside the city of Mexico are the ruins of the Mayan culture which is now a tourist area as well but the main difference is that the area that once sacrificed human lives is contradicted by the God of life in the womb of the Blessed Mother enshrined at the basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Through our Lady, our Blessed Mother, the advent of our Lord commenced. Through her, the life of Jesus the God-Man was realized and through her, we are constantly being led to experience our Lord's grace. May we prepare ourselves well for the coming of our Lord this season of advent and may we ask the Blessed Mother's intercession to constantly lead us her children to Jesus our Saviour.

Father Cerlouie



THE PRIEST OF AUSCHWITZ

During the Second World War, Polish Priest Maximilian Kolbe was arrested by the German Gestapo for hiding Jews and Polish refugees from the Nazis. When three prisoners disappeared from the Auschwitz concentration camp, the deputy camp commander issued orders to pick ten men to be starved to death in order to deter further escape attempts. One of these ten, [Franciszek Gajowniczek](#), began to cry out, "My wife! My children! I will never see them again!" At this point, Kolbe stepped forward, removed his cap, and said, "I am a Catholic Priest. Let me take his place. I am old. He has a wife and children." Amazingly, the commander allowed the request.

In the starvation cell, he celebrated Mass each day and sang hymns with his fellow prisoners. After two weeks of dehydration and starvation, only Kolbe remained alive. Because the cell was needed for other prisoners, he was given a lethal injection. Those present say he raised his left arm and calmly waited for the injection.

A gentle challenge: Keep your mind open about how you may serve others. Avoid self-imposed limitations. God may have something bigger in store for you.



A Pastor's Act Of Kindness Saves Three

The following story is told in more detail by [Ilene Wright](#). Here is the abbreviated version:

Years ago, Ilene's preacher noticed the family standing in front of him at a New Orleans convenience store did not have enough money to pay for their few items. He tapped the man on the shoulder and said, "You don't need to turn around, but please accept this money." The man took the money without ever seeing the preacher.

Nine years later, the pastor was invited to speak at a church in New Orleans. After the service, a man walked up to the preacher and shared this story about how he had come to faith in Christ: "Several years ago, my wife and our child were destitute. We had lost everything, had no jobs, no money and were living in our car. We also lost all hope, and agreed to a suicide pact, including our child. However, we decided to first give our son some food, so we drove to a convenience store to buy him some food and milk."

"While we were standing in line at the store, we realized that we did not have enough money to pay for these items, but a man behind us asked us to please take the money from his hand and not look at him. This man told us that 'Jesus loves you.'"

"We left the store, drove to our designated suicide site, and wept for hours. We couldn't go through with it, so we drove away. As we drove, we noticed a church with a sign out front which said, 'Jesus love you.' We went to that church the very next Sunday, and both my wife and I were saved that day."

He then told the pastor, "When you began speaking this morning, I knew immediately that you were the man who gave us that money." How did he know? The pastor was from South Africa and had a very distinct accent. He continued, "Your act of kindness was much more than a simple good deed. Three people are alive today because of it."

A gentle challenge: Maintain your spiritual antennae, remembering that God can multiply the smallest gift many times over.

(Taken from the Inspirational Christmas Stories on a website)



THE MIRACULOUS MEDAL

GRACE RECEIVED

Among the miracles of the Miraculous Medal the most famous was that of the conversion absolutely unexpected, unbelieving Jew Alfonso Ratisbonne, who chose to carry the medal around his neck just to please a friend. In a visit to the Roman Church of S. Andrea delle Frate, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal appeared dazzling, beautiful, literally turning around a soul. It was January 20, 1842. He subsequently became a Catholic, and soon, a priest and missionary. Even today there are many graces attributed to the Virgin of the Miraculous Medal.

From **Father Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata, Italy.**



STUBBORN WOMAN

It was Saturday afternoon, I and a group of young adults were visiting a convalescent home. As the people watching through the windows saw us arrive, smiles appeared on their sad faces and they gave us a festive greeting. Other came to meet us with an air of expectation.

First, we went to the chapel to communicate and witness to these brothers and sisters who were so alone and often hopeless. Then we divided into two groups; I went to the men's side.

I immediately sensed a heavy and gloomy atmosphere. Two of the elderly men, in particular, glared at me while, with apparent indifference, they continued to play cards. We approached them, greeted them cordially and tried to engage in conversation. One of the two angrily rose to his feet and cursing, growled at me to get away and not leave one of those "little insignificant things."

The young people in our group were astonished, and encouraged me to leave him alone – because at that point he could start a fight. Instead, I felt very calm and strong. I approached him anew and offered the Miraculous Medal telling him not to be afraid. He sneered at me, grabbed the Medal and threw it on the floor.

I calmly picked it up and sat next to them. The old man still grumbled but in the end he said, "Very well, that thing has won...leave it for me then, but only in friendship".

The next day I received a phone call. "Mr. X died with the Medal in his hand. He asked us to let you know and to thank you."

From **Father Kolbe Missionaries of the Immaculata, Italy.**