

75th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe

Week 8. October 2 - 9



The Founding of the Militia of the Immaculata

When Jesus called the disciples to follow Him, He taught them for three years and they experienced the Crucifixion and the Resurrection BEFORE He sent them out to preach the Gospel. Many times when a person is called by God or Our Lady, they first must be taught and much of this teaching is the Way of the Cross in order to prepare them before they can go forth and do ministry and proclaim the Gospel.

On Saturday, January 20, 1917 Maximilian heard the story of the conversion of Alphonse Ratisbonne and He became more determined than ever to consecrate his ministry to the Blessed Virgin. The story of Alphonse led Maximilian to read about the story of the Miraculous Medal and St. Catherine Laboure and he recalled how Our Lady spoke to him in the vision of the Two Crowns as a boy.

From what he had read and the hostility toward the Church that was prevalent everywhere, Maximilian decided to form a new religious association which would combat, heresy, unbelief and schism, and would confront with missionary zeal the enemies of Christ and the Church.

So on October 16, 1917 with six other Conventual Franciscans the Militia of the Immaculata was founded in the Seminary of the Conventual Franciscans in Rome.

From the beginning Maximilian experienced resistance both within the Order, the Church and the world.

They were Immediately forbidden to solicit fellow students to join the Militia of the Immaculata or even to talk about it for one year.

Many in the Franciscan Order could not envisage St. Francis printing books and newspapers, broadcasting and preaching the Gospel through motion pictures. Even today, when friars think of reforming the Order they begin by going barefoot and wearing rags and fasting. But for Maximilian, to be a true Franciscan was to spread the Gospel by any and all means.

And this was just the first year!

Maximilian's response to this was , "the cross, the cross, the cross! The source of genuine happiness!"

No one who says "Yes!" to God and Our Lady should expect anything else. The cross must always come first on our road to discipleship and ministry.

Prayer :

O Lord Jesus Christ, to follow in Your footsteps is to follow the way of the cross. May we learn the Way of the Cross first in order to be true disciples and preachers of Your Gospel. Amen

Meditations and Questions

1. How has God and Our Lady called me?
2. What obstacles have I experienced in answering their call?
3. How have I embrace the cross in my life and ministry?
4. What obstacles has the MI experienced?
5. How have I responded to those obstacles?