

**PART 5**

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**Consecration to the Immaculata: a Way to Holiness,  
in the Footsteps of Mary, the Virgin Presenting Offerings and the Virgin Mother**  
Readings from the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe

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**Mary is the Virgin Mother.** This is the Virgin's feature that stands out immediately. She is, above all, the Mother of God. At the Annunciation, Mary gave her assent in faith and actually made available her body for the incarnation of the Son of God.

We recall, in this regard, a well-known passage from Luke's Gospel (11:27-28), in which there is a woman of the people who, admiring the extraordinary nature of the message that Jesus announced, raised her voice in the middle of the crowd, exclaiming, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you!" And yet, Jesus replied: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Mary is the Mother of Jesus, as St. Augustine wrote, not only for bringing the Lord in her womb, but especially for having received Him in faith. She lived a very tender love for the Son and his brethren (cf. KW 991).

Mary went promptly to her cousin Elizabeth to lend an exquisite evangelical charity service (cf. Lk 1:39-46). She was a caring mother at Cana: her carefulness increased the celebration and caused the faith of the disciples of the Lord to grow (cf. Jn 2:1-12): This motherhood reached universal dimensions under the Cross where she became the Mother of every man on earth.

There are two dimensions of the motherhood of Mary towards Christ: the physical dimension that we cannot ignore, because it gives us the truth about the Incarnation, and the spiritual dimension that indicates a relationship with Jesus that goes beyond the physical bond. We also can live this second dimension. As Jesus says, we also are brothers, sisters and mothers of the Lord if we listen to His word and put it into practice! (cf. Lk 8:21).

This motherhood of Mary that we call "spiritual" toward Jesus, has been enlarged to reach the size of the world, to embrace each one of us, as is clear in the Gospel of John, where Jesus offered the Mother to the disciple. There, Mary became the one who generates children to faith, not in the physical sense, of course, but in the sense of caring for the brethren of her Son in faith, to show all people the Son as the only point of reference. "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5). Mary exercises her motherhood towards us, making sure that Christ is born, grows and strengthens within us, as St. Maximilian stated:

*"In Mary's womb our soul must be reborn after the form of Jesus Christ. She is bound to feed the soul with the milk of her grace, raise it as lovingly as she nourished, looked after, and raised Jesus. At her knee the soul must learn to know and love Jesus. From her Heart it must draw love toward Him, or even love Him with her heart and become like Him through love" (KW 1295).*

In another text Maximilian wrote:

*"Only at the time of God's judgment in Heaven shall we become aware of the solicitude that our tender Heavenly Mother has had for each of us, ever since the beginning, of the solicitude that she has toward every soul, her child, to shape it according to the pattern of Jesus, her firstborn Son, the prototype of holiness, God and man" (KW 1313).*

The "form," the "mold" in which every Christian must be shaped is Jesus Christ. Conformity to Christ, having His own sentiments, is what primarily is dear to Mary, as the Mother of Jesus.

This is also true of the motherhood of the Church: to announce Jesus Christ and make Him grow in the heart of each person so that his or her life is happy, finds its direction, depth, hope and truth. It is

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really as Pope Benedict XVI said at the inaugural Mass of his pontificate, “Christ does not take anything and gives everything.” As already proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council: “Only Christ fully reveals man to himself. Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light” (GS 22). And this is the motherhood of the Militia of the Immaculata, according to the desire of St. Maximilian, proclaiming Jesus Christ!

*“That is the MI: to let her into all hearts, to bring her into being within all hearts, that by entering those hearts and taking most perfect possession of them, she may there give birth to the sweet Jesus, God, and there raise Him to perfect age. What a beautiful mission! ... Is that not true? ... The elevation of man to God Man, through Man God’s Mother” (KW 508).*

To announce Jesus Christ is a beautiful mission, because every person finds in Him the happiness and fullness of meaning for his or her life. We may share the spiritual motherhood of Mary, not only listening to the Word of God, but also by becoming co-workers in her maternal mission. In fact Maximilian writes that Mary does not want to carry out her mission alone, but that she wants to engage us too. Motherhood means care, love, attention to others. Maximilian is an effective witness to it. The proclamation of the Gospel is the greatest act of love; it is the first charity. The Gospel message transforms the proud-hearted and gives the humble the awareness of their dignity, as already announced by the Virgin of Nazareth in her Magnificat. The proclamation of the Gospel is also the first form of charity for every member of the Militia of the Immaculata.

Maximilian Kolbe, facing the reality of his time (atheism in particular) said that:

*“These poor people, therefore, need light, a great deal of supernatural light, of supernatural energy. They are unhappy, discontented, because they take as their ultimate goal what is only a means and therefore, after reaching the happiness to which they aspire, cannot find what they were looking for. And they continue to search with a dejected heart, with bitterness in their souls. How can we fail to reach out to them? How can we not to help them placate their hearts, lift their mind above all that passes toward the one ultimate purpose, God? Love for one’s neighbor pushes those souls who have already found the true ideal of life not to forget their brothers and sisters around them. One of the many associations that practice this love of one’s neighbor is the Militia of the Immaculata” (KW 1237).*

Maximilian is also a witness of that love which is ready for martyrdom. Maximilian is the “*man for man*,” who lived with the conviction that “*Only love creates*” (cf. KW 1205). This is the lesson he learned in his deep and intimate daily experience of communion with Christ through his consecration to the Immaculata.

Being at the school of Mary led Maximilian, and can lead each of us, to be “for others” in everyday life, in the family, at work, in our social relationships. The Marian manner of life has love as its center, its heart, its fundamental dimension.

### **Mary is the Virgin Presenting Offerings**

Mary, as stated in *Marialis Cultus*, is the pattern of the worship which consists in **making our own life an offering** pleasing to God.

For Her the “rejoice” of the Annunciation soon became “a sword will pierce your soul,” because that Child would be a sign of contradiction (Lk 2:35). It is an allusion to the passion of the Son which will become her passion. Mary shared from moment to moment the experience of the Son, and transformed her *fiat* into a daily *stabat*, faithfully adhering to the mission that the Father entrusted to her.

St. Maximilian called this stage of life “suffering out of love”.

Jesus did not come down from the Cross, Mary did not move away from the Cross. So Jesus has loved us!

He entrusted His cause to the Father and, as the Letter to the Hebrews says, the Father heard the Son who spoke to Him with prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears (cf. Hebrews 5:7). Yes,

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Jesus was “*heard because of His reverent submission,*” as stated in Hebrews again. The Resurrection is the response to the confident surrender of the Son into his Father's hands.

Mary was there because she also confidently entrusted her life to the Father. Mary knew that God does not fail in His promises. She had sung it in the Magnificat. Suffering is the result and consequence of love. St. Francis was crying because “Love is not loved.”

This is true for us, too. St. Maximilian wrote that in human life there are three stages: preparation for work, work, and suffering out love. Here his life is evidently described as in a fresco. The offer of life through the hands of Mary to Christ was the reason why St. Maximilian lived and died for love. In Auschwitz, his serenity was contagious because he had a certainty in his heart.

This is the last note he wrote to his mother before dying:

*“My Beloved Mother, toward the end of May I came by a train to the Auschwitz camp. All is well with me. Beloved Mama, do not worry for me and for my health, because the good God is in every place and with great love He thinks about everyone and everything” (KW 961).*

Here is the certainty of St. Maximilian: *“God is in every place and with great love He thinks about everyone and everything.”* Here is the answer to suffering. So it is no longer a stumbling block, because God is there and *“comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (2 Cor 1:3-4).*

We can live out our mission when we are active and enjoy times of serenity, but also when we are in trouble, if we live in union with Christ the Redeemer through our total offering to the Immaculata. This becomes a way of salvation for us and for everyone.

Human life always involves suffering, which, lived with Mary at the foot of the Cross, may become a “Paschal suffering.”

Faith, as well as consecration to the Immaculata, does not protect us from the dangers of life, but gives us the opportunity to offer everything to God through Mary, truly everything: joy, pain, happy events and moments of suffering, leading us to welcome the consolation of God so as to be in turn comforters for others. How else should we call St. Maximilian’s experience in the starvation bunker but a consolation experience that enabled him to console and lead his companions to God?

Mary’s four fundamental attitudes:

- The attentive Virgin,
- The Virgin in prayer,
- The Virgin Mother and
- The Virgin presenting offerings,

show us how to live our consecration to her.

Sometimes we ask how to live out our consecration to the Immaculata. Here we have the answer. It consists in re-living within us those same attitudes so that the Gospel message may be reflected in our lives.

### Questions for discussion:

- Has St. Maximilian something to tell you with his ideal:  
The consecration to the Immaculata and the passion for the mission “to conquer the world for Christ through the Immaculata”?
- Would you embrace his ideal in your life?

### Commitment in our life:

To be near suffering people, giving them the gift of our presence, love and consolation.