



Prot. 02/2021

***International Center  
Militia of the Immaculata***

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Dear National Presidents  
Dear National Assistants  
c/c Dear Provincial Ministers and Custodians  
Dear General Superiors of Kolbean-inspired  
Institutes Superiors  
THEIR SEES



*He didn't suffer death but gave his life*

Madrid, February 11, 2021  
Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

Maria!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, knights of the Immaculata,

On behalf of the International Council of the Militia of the Immaculata, I would firstly like to share our desire, that we hope be converted into fervent prayer, so that this 2021, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the glorious martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe - in which we will live a 'Kolbean' year – may be a time where we take on the example of his virtues, especially his unlimited faith and his consecration to the Immaculata. That is to say, we must ask for the grace to deepen ourselves in our Founder's school of holiness, a school of service and apostleship, an *active* and *effective* militia, willing to



promote and defend the Good with the “arms” of faith, hope and charity in the conditions and realities in which we live at present, in the midst of COVID-19 that has attacked our world, claiming so many lives, and calling into question many of society’s habits, especially societies of “welfare” which are opulent, self-sufficient, but inhuman and selfish in a post-Christian Western World... In the heroic act of St. Maximilian Kolbe, we contemplate the admirable exercise of human freedom, the full giving of one’s self as the propitiatory victim in the service of good. Consequently, St. Maximilian Kolbe reconstructed human dignity exactly there in the place where the upmost was being done to destroy it. This extreme offering, this martyrdom moved by charity, was not an improvisation, but it was the virtue St. Maximilian Kolbe lived all his life exercising, always leaning on the Mother of God, the Mediatrix of all graces, the Blessed Virgin Mary, conceived without original sin. This is our ideal. It is above all the “unceasing martyrdom” to which Saint Maximilian Kolbe refers to in a conference he gave in Niepokalanow: “*Is it our ideal to shed blood for Christ? If not all at once, then throughout one's whole life through the strict observance of the Rule and obligations*” (13.06.1939). We too ask the Immaculata for the grace to offer with *serenity* and supernatural joy our daily *bloodless* martyrdom, in each particular vocation and state of life we are living. This is the science of the Cross...

Through Divine Providence, the year we have just begun coincides with the year dedicated to Saint Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, proposed to us by Pope Francis in his Apostolic letter *Patris Corde*. St. Joseph, the Holy Patriarch, and custodian of Jesus and the Immaculata, head of the Holy Family, is an example to follow thanks to his attitudes (*a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father, a creatively courageous father, a working father, a father in the shadows*). We can see these attributes reflected and recognizable in the moral and spiritual make up of St. Maximilian Kolbe. Both St. Joseph and St. Maximilian become examples of *filial trust* and, at the same time, of *fruitful spiritual human paternity*, which participates in the ultimate paternity of God, who is the principle and maintainer of all good. In the case of «Father» Kolbe, it is significant that the polish priest gave his life for that of a young «father» of a family, Franciszek Gajowniczek. In this regard, we cannot forget that beginning next March the whole Church will celebrate the Year of the Family on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope Francis’ post synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*. Certainly, the families of our world, so fragile today from so many points of view, constitute the preferential area of need and action for our Militia. All of us come from a family and are raised in a family.

Therefore, may our families become places where the Immaculata is especially venerated, where the ideal of the Militia is conveyed from parents to children, so that our families may become evangelizers for their neighbors. Let’s use the prayer of Pope Francis to the Holy Family of Jesus, Joseph and Mary from his exhortation:



*Holy Family of Nazareth,  
grant that our families too  
may be places of communion and prayer,  
authentic schools of the Gospel  
and small domestic churches.*

With these humble reflections, our beloved knights, we encourage you to celebrate to the fullest this year of St. Maximilian Kolbe, so that it may serve as a vigorous stimulus to be faithful to our charisma and so that we may revitalize our enthusiasm and zeal for our mission and apostolate. In this regard, we follow the inspiration and guidelines that the M.I. International Centre, through its President, Fr. Raffaele di Muro, offered to the entire worldwide family of the Militia of the Immaculata at the conclusion of the Centennial of its foundation in the document *«Beyond the Centenary! Let Us Work for the M.I. of the Future»*. During this Kolbean year, we will allow ourselves to be accompanied by the faithful, productive, spiritual assistance from the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, for which we are grateful in our work. It is recalled in the General Statutes of our Public Association of the Faithful that the Militia was founded as a «pious association» by Saint Maximilian Kolbe and his six other conventual friars in the *Collegium Seraphicum*. There is, therefore, an existing original “bond” that unites us to this religious congregation and to the Franciscan charisma. We are proud of it! According to article 14 of our General Statutes, the Militia collaborates with the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in carrying out its mission. To that end, the Holy See recognizes and entrusts to the Order the spiritual assistance of the Militia (Art. 21 and 30 in relation to art. 31 of the Statutes), both at international and national levels.

At Christmas, we once again experienced how in the midst of the cold and darkness of a conceited world that insists on living as if God does not exist, suddenly, silently, a Light appeared, that of the Word, in Bethlehem, the fire of God’s Love, which has become incarnate in the womb of the Immaculata, and is courageously guarded by Saint Joseph. We too, like St. Maximilian Kolbe, “enkindled” by this Light of Jesus, are light in the midst of our world (cf. Mt 5, 14)... Our hearts interiorly renewed through Baptism, must bring the warmth of the Hearth of Christ to our brothers and sisters! This is the urgency of evangelization, to which our consecration to the Immaculata “enables” us. The Immaculata is the first and most interested in spreading the Good News of her Son to every corner of the earth.

Thus, during the Kolbean Year, in the circumstances and current conditions in which we find ourselves, still at the dawn of the Third Millennium, we remain committed, without truce, to the New Kerygmatic Evangelization and the celebration to the service of the Gospel of hope: to this the Church and especially the last popes have insistently called us, unfolding the doctrinal and pastoral keys of the Second Vatican



Council. This is the proper mission of the Church and, therefore, of our Militia, because it is the mission of the Immaculata, the Mother of the Word, the Mother of the Gospel, the Mother of the Church.

St. John Paul II proposed pillars for the blessed mission in his post-synodal exhortations addressed to the Church on the different continents as we crossed the threshold into the Third Millennium. The invitation of the encounter with the living and risen Christ, our Savior, which should be the beginning of a journey of conversion generating communion and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in order to launch ourselves as members of the Mystical Body of Christ (the Church) into the mission of being credible witnesses of Christ in our world. This encounter-journey with Our Lord leads us to discover him in Sacred Scriptures, in the Sacraments, in his Church and in his Mother, the Immaculata. You see, brothers and sisters, we have much “material” to work on in-depth this year. Let us always take as an example the testimony of the glowing life of St. Maximilian Kolbe and so many other fellow knights that have preceded us in this mission on our road to heaven, holding the hand of Mary. In these recent difficult times, we experience how She, our Best Teacher, continues to effectively prepare her apostles for this mission. St. Maximilian Kolbe himself, St. Padre Pio, St. Teresa of Calcutta, St. John Paul II, the most recent Blessed Carlo Acutis and so many others... These apostles of true mercy, who identified themselves especially with our Mother, bringing her tenderness to the most in need, and being in a certain way, her hands and her arms that reached out with haste to all, especially to the most fragile. Moved by the Kolbean zeal, we must discern the new *fields of mission* to which the Immaculata is calling us at this time. We have already pointed out the family nucleus as our area of focus; we should continue to work our apostolate «at the foot of the cross» along with the sick, in the service of the Gospel of Life, so their suffering is offered together with the sacrifice of our Redeemer Jesus Christ (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 618). There are many knights working their mission in the mass media. Our membership of the Militia stimulates our creativity to be at the service and cause of the Immaculata...

In particular, we will continue providing the monthly intentions from the International Centre along with the intentions of Pope Francis so that we may live in communion this intense prayer as a family of the Militia of the Immaculata serving as an ideal preparation for evangelization in the Kolbean way. To these general intentions, let each one add their own, as inspired by the Holy Spirit. We know well that many national, regional and local centers have organized various activities to celebrate and commemorate the 80th anniversary of San Maximilian Maria Kolbe. Thank you for your effort and commitment!

For our part, since the start of the current pandemic in the Spring of 2020, we initiated the weekly, “online”, prayer of the Worldwide Rosary by the Militia of the Immaculata for the end of the pandemic. One can join each Saturday from a different

#### MILITIA IMMACULATAE

CONSOCIATIO CHRISTIFIDELIUM PUBLICA

CENTRUM INTERNATIONALIS

Via San Teodoro, 42 - 00186 Roma

ITALIA

Tel. +39 371 186 4824

roma@mi-international.org

www.mi-international.org



location through the International Centre's Facebook channel. We are solidary members of a great family, that of the Militia, but also of all Humanity. The coronavirus can be a simile of the moral ills that afflict our world, against which we must act firmly to grant life, spiritual life.

Therefore, as Knights of the Immaculata, we must prepare ourselves properly for the mission. Whether by solid formation to help know, confess and proclaim the Faith, or by strengthening of our will and our virtues... In the face of our enemies (the world, the devil and the flesh), the foundations of the «old or carnal man», who devastate with naturalism our interior (spiritual) life by way of concupiscence of the flesh, of the eyes and of the pride of life (1 John 2:16-17). For this reason, it would not be out of place for us to offer certain sacrifices and fasting from our pleasures without falling into a voluntarist Pelagianism, but wanting to correspond with our penance and reparation to so much love we have received and that unfortunately reject. Let us therefore love, with the heart of the Immaculata, the *unloved* love of her Son! We are convinced that a healthy asceticism, rooted in fervent, constant prayer, accompanied by a serious sacramental life, with particular attention to Confession and the Holy Eucharist, identifies us with Christ (Romans 6:5). To place our trust without reservation in the hands of the Immaculata, absolutely no longer trusting in our own strength, will make us more transparent, more docile to the action of grace for the good of all, both the closest and the farthest and also those who consider themselves our adversaries, that is, those who do not know and, therefore, reject God's love and oppose the Church.

Indeed, we must do everything possible to open the doors wide-open to Christ, as St. John Paul II called at the beginning of his pontificate. Who will easily open these doors if not the Immaculata, with our clinging to her through the radical living of consecration? United to the Immaculata we experience the action of her Spouse, the Holy Spirit, who simplifies our journey and fills it with supernatural joy, despite the difficulties that we will have to endure the more decisive and firmer is our commitment. Let me insist, *let us not forget Love....* In one of his last conferences, a year before his martyrdom, St. Maximilian Kolbe exhorted his friars, and he continues to exhort us all: *“Let us not forget, however, that all of good works, even the most sublime, such as maintenance of hospitals, schools, and missions, and even martyrdom, if they were done without love, they are less valuable than a single act of love alone. A single act of love helps the Church more in the sanctification of souls than do all the aforementioned works put together”* (25.08.1940).

Finally, in relation to the recent resignation of the International President, Angela Morais, whom we are grateful for her intense dedication to the Militia in her duties at the International Council successively as counselor, vice-president and president, we inform you that our intention is to call an assembly to elect a new President in accordance with the General Statutes. If the current circumstances permit, the convocation of said assembly would be for next August, 2021, on the occasion of a

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possible worldwide pilgrimage of the Militia of the Immaculata to Auschwitz, for the central act of celebration being the 80th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Maximilian.

Cordially, always with the Immaculata,

*Miquel Bordas Prószyński*  
Acting President of the International Centre  
Militia of the Immaculata