

Saint
Maximillian Mary Kolbe
14 August



Saint Maximillian Kolbe (1894 - 1941)

Maximillian Kolbe was born on 8 January 1894 in Poland, and joined the Franciscans in Lwów in 1910, and was ordained in 1918 – a time when Poland became free and independent for the first time in over 120 years.

He believed that the world was passing through a time of intense spiritual crisis, and that the role of Christians was to fight for the world's salvation with all the available means of modern communication. As such, he founded a newspaper, and a sodality called the Knights of Mary Immaculate, which spread widely in and outside of Poland.

In 1927 he founded a community, a "city of Mary," at Teresin, which was centered around the Franciscan friary. This community attracted many lay people and became self-supporting by publishing many periodicals and running its own radio station.

Poland's independence was not to last that long, as the Nazis invaded in 1939. During the Second World War, the community at Teresin sheltered thousands of refugees, most of whom were Jews. In 1941 he was arrested and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz, where he helped the inmates. In August of that year a prisoner escaped and so the authorities were choosing ten people at random to die by starvation. One of the men chosen had a family, and so Maximillian offered to take his place. Maximillian spent his last days comforting his fellow prisoners.

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How does the life of Saint Maximillian apply to our lives today?

Saint Maximillian Kolbe spent his whole life in the service of others. He served God first, neighbour second and himself last. He did not let the circumstances he found himself in prevent him from doing God's work or spreading the Gospel.

The means of communication which he had at his disposal were significantly less compared to what we have and these days. So just as Saint Maximillian believed in effective communication and used it to spread the Name of Christ in the world, let us use all the means we have available to do the same. Especially in our parish communities for those who are shut in and may be sheltering in light of the winter and COVID-19. Not everyone has email, so even for these people a hard copy of the parish bulletin and a hello would go a long way to spreading the name of Christ and keeping in touch with them.

Quote:

"There are two irreconcilable enemies in the depth of every soul: good and evil, sin and love."

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Collect

O God, who filled the Priest and Martyr Saint Maximilian Kolbe with a burning love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary and with zeal for souls and love of neighbour, graciously grant, through his intercession, that, striving for your glory by eagerly serving others, we may be conformed, even until death, to your Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 15:12-16

Go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last

Jesus said to his disciples:

'This is my commandment:

love one another,
as I have loved you.

A man can have no greater love
than to lay down his life for his friends.

You are my friends,
if you do what I command you.

I shall not call you servants any more,
because a servant does not know
his master's business;

I call you friends,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
You did not choose me:
no, I chose you;
and I commissioned you
to go out and to bear fruit,
fruit that will last;
and then the Father will give you

Antiphon

Greater love has no one
than to lay down his life for his friends, says the Lord.

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Hymn for the Memorial of Saint Maximillian Kolbe

No greater love can e'er be shown
than laying down one's life:
in this way friendship can be shown
in times of calm and strife.

Saint Maximillian kept his eye
on Lord Jesus Christ,
and imitated His great love,
whose life was sacrificed.

Saint Maximillian help us please
like you to make Christ known,
in a world where many gods prevail
instead of Christ alone.

May we like this Saint give our place
for one in greater need,
by daily dying to ourselves,
and in Jesus be freed.

CM (McKee)

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono

Music Links to the Scripture Readings

[No Greater Love](#) (Michael Herry)

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