

The Marian Apostolate

St. Maximilian said, "Mary is the most perfect and most holy work of God, for as St. Bonaventure said, 'God can create a greater and more perfect world, but He cannot exalt a creature to higher dignity than that to which He exalted Mary.'"



St. Anthony & Immaculate Conception Provinces

Brother Daniel Geary, OFM Conv.

12290 Folly Quarter Rd.

Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

716-228-4516 (St. Joseph Cupertino Friary)

The Franciscans, and in particular the Conventuals have always been known as the Champions of the Immaculate Conception. Let us celebrate this feast with great solemnity!

St. Anthony's Devotion to the Immaculate Conception

Before She became Mother of God "the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of Her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin..." as Pope Pius IX infallibly stated in 1854. This solemn definition reflects the theological insight of Bl. John Duns Scotus (1266-1308), who articulated this truth of Mary's Immaculate Conception with clarity and force some seventy years after the death of St. Anthony. Although Anthony never explicitly preached that the Virgin Mary was conceived without sin, he nonetheless implicitly upheld this Marian privilege and prepared the way for Scotus and Pius IX.

He quotes and confirms St. Augustine who declared, "Where there is a question of sin, exclude as far as I am concerned, the Blessed Virgin Mary." None of the saints can say, "We have no sin" (1 Jn 1:8). "But," Anthony adds, "from the universal confession of sin Mary among all creatures is to be excepted for She was 'full of grace.'" This "superior," "singular" grace was bestowed upon Her "that She might worthily bear in Her womb Him, who from the beginning held in His hands the control of the universe." In his mind "the pure Virgin" was "full of grace" and "free from sin" in view of the divine maternity. In other words, he saw that it was fitting and true that the Mother of God should be "Immaculate"—this is the basis for the Immaculate Conception. "The Father clothed His Son Jesus in a white robe, that is, flesh without any stain of sin conceived by the Virgin Immaculate." Therefore, St. Anthony helped to lay the foundations for the solemn definition of 1854 by the implications of his sermons.

National MI Council

The National Council of the MI met at Marytown on October 16-17 and began preparation for the 75th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Maximilian Kolbe. The National MI conferences between 2012 & 2016 will focus on the Virgin Mary's relationship to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, and will conclude the ABC's of the MI and living one's consecration.

What should we friars do to prepare for and celebrate the 75th?



Saint Francis' Prayer to Mary, the Mother of God

Holy Virgin Mary, among women, there is no one like you born into the world:

*You are the daughter and the servant of the most high and supreme King and Father of heaven,
You are the mother of our most holy Lord Jesus Christ*

You are the spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel and all the powers of the heavens and all the saints

to your most holy beloved Son, the Lord and Master.

Amen.

**On Mary, Full of Grace, God Was Captivated by Her Humility
Benedict XVI Reflects on Dante's (A Third Order Franciscan) Divine Comedy**

December 8, 2006

Dante Alighieri underlines this in the last canto of "Paradise": "Virgin mother, daughter of your Son, humble and loftier than any other creature, fixed term of the eternal counsel" (Paradise XXXIII, 1-3). The Virgin herself in the Magnificat, her canticle of praise, says this: "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord ... For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness" (Luke 1:46, 48). Yes, God was captivated by Mary's humility, who found favor in his eyes. (cf. Luke 1:30). In this way she became the Mother of God, image and model of the Church, chosen among the peoples to receive the Lord's blessing and radiate it to the whole human family.

Start a Village of the Immaculata

"When they entered the city, they went to the upper room where they were staying. . . . All these devoted themselves with one accord to prayer, together with some women, and Mary the mother of Jesus. . . . When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled . . . they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." —Acts 1:13, 14; 2:1, 4

The Holy Spirit still calls us to gather together as a family for prayer and mutual support. This is certainly the case since the closing of the Second Vatican Council; witness the explosion of independent and parish-based prayer groups throughout the Church, many of them explicitly Marian.

Group Prayer: Essential to the Movement

Militia of the Immaculata (MI) members who come together through a "Village of the Immaculata" prayer gathering can be confident of being a part of a sure movement of the Holy Spirit. St. Maximilian Kolbe knew of the importance of MIs coming together in prayer. We can work and worship "more effectively," explained Maximilian, by joining forces rather than relying solely on individual initiative, since "there will always be those works that individuals acting alone will be unable to accomplish." MIs in prayer gatherings "pool their efforts and resources in prayer. . . . There is opportunity for exchanging ideas, for discussing and deciding the things to do . . . or for preparing oneself on apologetics."

As for calling today's MI prayer meetings "villages," we again take our cue from our patron. "It seems to me that all the Cities of the Immaculata will constitute one whole, intimately united, one world army, continually fighting [evil] without ceasing until the end of the world."

MI prayer meetings are smaller versions of the cities of the Immaculate (such as Niepokalanow, Marytown, etc), thus "villages" of the Immaculata. They have the same supernatural purpose as the larger units. "Common to all groups will be the drive to reach the goal, the salvation of every possible soul and the highest possible degree of holiness for everyone."

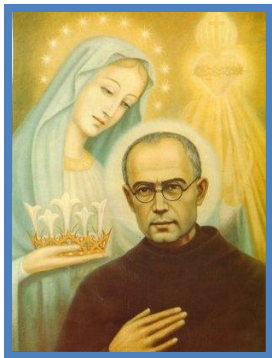
Of course, Maximilian never ceased to remind us that all MI evangelical activity is directly empowered by the Immaculate Virgin Mary. We are simply her willing instruments through total consecration.

If you are interested in starting a "Village of the Immaculate" Prayer Group, feel free to contact a member of the Marian Apostolate.

Let us begin now to prepare for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception!

If you are interested, please find attached a Novena to the Immaculate Conception.

Prayer for those Suffering from an Addiction



St. Maximilian Kolbe, your life of love and labor for souls was sacrificed amid the horrors of a concentration camp and hastened to its end by an injection of a deadly drug. Look with compassion upon (name of person) who is now entrapped in addiction to drugs or alcohol and whom we now recommend to your powerful intercession. Having offered your own life to preserve that of a family man, we turn to you with trust, confident that you will understand and help.

Obtain for us the grace never to withhold our love and understanding, nor to fail in persevering prayer that the enslaving bonds of addiction may be broken and that full health may be restored to him/her whom we love.

We will never cease to be grateful to God who has helped us and heard your prayer for us.

Amen