

Set Yourself Free

by Deacon Patrick Maher, t.o. carm.



St. Maximilian Kolbe is the patron Saint of the incarcerated. He found the answer to one of the most difficult experiences of life-that is to live with oneself.

At an early age St. Maximilian made the decision to let God fill him on his quest in life. From his writings we read that he was presented with a choice to accept the crowns of purity and martyrdom. There are many times in the course of our own lives when we are given a choice to accept God's grace or not.

Our choices either set us free or they imprison us. Some of us find we have made serious mistakes by our choices and suffer imprisonment for our actions. Sometimes that imprisonment is physical as when one finds oneself in prison and other times it is spiritual and emotional where one finds oneself imprisoned by guilt, shame or regret.

The logo for the MI Prison Ministry is the symbol that reminds us that we are all sometimes incarcerated within ourselves. Mary is a Mother to us all. She brings comfort to the troubled soul and the tormentor of life, the evil one, cannot stay to torment the soul. This is why so many inmates have found comfort with our Blessed Mother.

Approximately 1,000 inmates have consecrated themselves to Mary as her knights thus bringing peace to their troubled souls. It is her loving presence that unites us to her Son and our Lord Jesus Christ, in a way that removes the shackles of incarceration from our minds no matter what the state of our bodies.

St. Maximilian was physically in prison at Auschwitz, but was spiritually free from anger, hatred and revenge. The imprisonment and starvation he was subjected to never broke his spirit and we too can experience the same inner freedom.

Through consecration to Mary one can become free. The chains of past choices which enslaved us spiritually and emotionally are broken and we become free to love, to hope and to forgive.