Wear the Miraculous Medal

The Miraculous Medal owes its origins to the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the chapel of the Rue du Bac, Paris, in 1830. She appeared to Catherine Labouré, showing the young nun and future canonized saint the design of a medal that serves as a mini-catechism of the Church’s teaching on Our Lady.

In a vision, Mary stood on a globe with brilliant light streaming from her jeweled fingers. “Behold the symbol of graces shed upon those who ask for them,” she said, representing herself as Mediatress of All Graces. Surrounding her a banner read, “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you,” symbolizing her Immaculate Conception. The vision reversed, showing the letter “M” entwined with a cross above the Sacred Hearts. This image represents Mary as Co-redemptrix, a unique participator in Jesus’ saving act of redemption.

Millions of medals have been distributed and untold graces given “to those who wear it around the neck” as the Virgin promised to St. Catherine. Hearing of the miraculous conversion of the agnostic Alphonse Ratisbonne through the medal, St. Maximilian made wearing it and giving it away an integral part of his movement. He called the Miraculous Medal “a ‘bullet’ with which the faithful soldier hits the enemy, that is evil, and thus rescues souls.”

Marian Prayer of Marian Consecration

(Composed by St. Maximilian Kolbe)

O Immaculata, Queen of Heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, God has willed to entrust the entire order of mercy to you. I, (name), a repentant sinner, cast myself at your feet, humbly imploring you to take me with all that I am and have, wholly to yourself as your possession and property. Please make of me, of all my powers of soul and body, of my whole life, death and eternity, whatever most pleases you.

If it pleases you, use all that I am and have without reserve, wholly to accomplish what was said of you: “She will crush your head,” and “You alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world.” Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands for introducing and increasing your glory to the maximum in all the many strayed and indifferent souls, and thus help extend as far as possible the blessed kingdom of the most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For wherever you enter you obtain the grace of conversion and growth in holiness, since it is through your hands that all graces come to us from the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

V. Allow me to praise you, O Sacred Virgin
R. Give me strength against your enemies

Gaining a Plenary Indulgence upon consecration to the Immaculata

A Plenary Indulgence—the complete remission of temporal punishment in purgatory due to sin—is granted by the Church for consecration to the Immaculata. This great honor was bestowed on the Movement by Pope Pius XI in 1926.

To receive the indulgence, you must:

• Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation within the eight days preceding your consecration,
• Attend Mass and receive Holy Communion on the day of your consecration,
• Pray at least an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for the intentions of the Holy Father, and
• Renounce all attachment to sin, even venial sin, on your consecration date.

Daily Miraculous Medal Prayer

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you, and for all who do not have recourse to you, especially the enemies of Holy Church and all those recommended to you.
To better “win the world for the Immaculata,” the friars utilized the most modern techniques. This enabled them to publish countless catechetical and devotional tracts, a daily newspaper with a circulation of 230,000 and a monthly magazine with a circulation of over one million. Maximilian used short-wave radio and planned to build a motion picture studio—he was a true “apostle of the mass media.”

He established another City of the Immaculata in Nagasaki, Japan, in 1930, and envisioned future evangelization centers worldwide.

Father Maximilian was a ground-breaking theologian. His insights on the Immaculate Conception anticipated the Marian theology of the Second Vatican Council and further developed the Church's understanding of Mary as "Mediatrix" of all the graces of the Trinity, and as "Advocate" for God's people.

In 1941, the Nazis imprisoned Father Maximilian in the Auschwitz death camp. There he offered his life for another prisoner and was condemned to slow death in a starvation bunker. On August 14, 1941, his impatient captors ended his life with a fatal injection. Pope John Paul II canonized Maximilian as a “martyr of charity” in 1982.

Total Consecration to Mary

Consecration means setting yourself aside for service to God. The Church has always advocated consecrating yourself to Jesus Christ through the ideal of St. Maximilian as a primary intercessor.

Marian consecration, therefore, is no archaic spirituality but a living and active means of advancing the Faith as a People of God. It is not just another “devotion,” but a complete spirituality, one not lightly undertaken. It is a formal act of self-giving that does not stop at Mary, but is Christ-directed. It is really consecration to Jesus; in the words of St. Maximilian, “To lead every individual with Mary to the most Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

In 1992 the Holy Father developed our understanding of this consecration even further. By dying for another and “consecrating his life to the Immaculate Virgin,” St. Maximilian has become, suggests the Holy Father, a “prophet and a sign of the new era, the civilization of love.” Here, St. Pope John Paul II is clearly endorsing Kolbe's example of Marian consecration as a critical element of his “new evangelization” and Saint Maximilian as a primary intercessor.

St. Maximilian Kolbe’s Evangelization

Saint Maximilian was born Raymond Kolbe in Poland, January 8, 1894. In 1910, he entered the Conventual Franciscan Order. He was sent to study in Rome where he was ordained a priest in 1918.

Father Maximilian returned to Poland in 1919 and began to spread the Militia of the Immaculata (MI) movement of Marian consecration, which he founded while in Rome, on October 16, 1917. In 1927, he established an evangelization center near Warsaw called Niepokalanow—the “City of the Immaculata.” By 1939, the City had expanded from eighteen friars to an incredible 650, making it the largest Catholic religious house in the world.

Kolbe and the Militia of the Immaculata

The Militia of the Immaculata (MI) is a worldwide evangelization movement founded by St. Maximilian Kolbe on October 16, 1917, dedicated to total consecration to Mary. Maximilian gathered together six like-minded young friars before a statue of the Blessed Virgin and drafted a charter that would establish one of the most influential Marian apostolates ever. The charter still serves as a blue-print of spiritual progress today. It encourages total consecration to Mary Immaculate as a means of spiritual renewal for individuals and society. The MI is one of the few Vatican-approved public associations whose mission, like that of the Catholic Church, is universal.

This worldwide movement employs prayer as the main weapon in the spiritual battle with evil and apostolic initiatives throughout society, either individually or in groups, to deepen the knowledge of the Gospel and our Catholic Faith in themselves and in others.

Spiritual Benefits of Total Consecration

Consecrating yourself to Mary through the ideal of St. Maximilian will be one of the most important acts of your life. You will become willing instruments of Our Lady, the handmaid of the Lord and the immaculate instrument of God.

Through total consecration you cooperate with Mary in the work of building up and renewing the modern day Church. She will enlighten your mind, guide your will, empower your efforts and intercede for you in a special way before the throne of the Father.

You will also share in the intercessory prayers of the faithful worldwide, who pray daily for those who have consecrated themselves to Mary.

The spirit of total consecration to the Immaculata is the spirit of continual conversion. Not everyone who consecrates himself understands perfectly in the beginning, the power of this consecration. But when lived in the spirit of willingness and humility, the Immaculata will elevate our natural gifts and inspire us to holiness and fruitful service within the Church.

As Jesus said to those who would stand up and follow him: “Even greater things than these will you do.”

1. Select the date on which you want to consecrate yourself, preferably a Marian feast day (see below).

2. On the day of your consecration, recite the official act of consecration (on back of brochure). Renounce all attachment to sin and, if possible, attend Mass. In this way you will be making an effort to remove all obstacles to Our lady making you her own in the Holy Spirit.

3. Finally, ask Our Lady and St. Maximilian to show you how you can best serve the Lord from this moment on.

Marian Feast Days

January 1  Solemnity of the Mother of God
February 11  Our Lady of Lourdes
March 25  Annunciation
May 13  Our Lady of Fatima
May 31  Visitation
June 27  Our Lady of Perpetual Help
July 6  Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
August 15  Assumption
August 22  Queenship of Mary
September 8  Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary
September 15  Our Lady of Sorrows
October 7  Our Lady of the Rosary
November 21  Presentation of Mary
December 8  Immaculate Conception
December 12  Our Lady of Guadalupe

Preparation for Total Consecration

1. Prepare yourself for the day of consecration with daily Mass if possible, the Rosary, spiritual reading; and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation on or shortly before the day of your consecration.

2. On the day of your consecration, recite the official act of consecration (on back of brochure). Renounce all attachment to sin and, if possible, attend Mass. In this way you will be making an effort to remove all obstacles to Our Lady making you her own in the Holy Spirit.

3. Finally, ask Our Lady and St. Maximilian to show you how you can best serve the Lord from this moment on.

"Maximilian Kolbe is a prophet and a sign of the new era, the civilization of love.” – Pope John Paul II

*To the trainee friars*