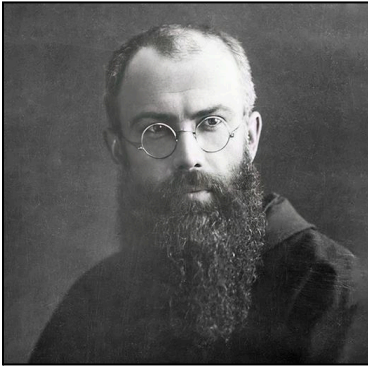


Saint Maximilian Kolbe



Date of birth: January 8, 1894
Birthplace: Zduńska Wola, Poland
Date of death: August 14, 1941
Canonization: October 10, 1982 by Pope John Paul II
Feast Day: August 14

Patron Saint of: Prisoners, drug addicts, families, amateur radio operators, pro-life movement

About Maximilian Kolbe:

Raymund (Maximilian) Kolbe was born in Poland in 1894 to a German father and Polish mother. At age 12, he experienced a vision of the Virgin Mary, who held two crowns: a white one, representing purity, and a red one, representing martyrdom. She asked if he would be willing to accept either crown; the young boy responded that he would accept both. This experience spurred a lifelong devotion to Our Lady.

In 1910, Raymund and his elder brother joined the Conventual Franciscans. Raymund, taking the religious name Maximilian Kolbe, took his final vows in 1914 and was ordained a priest in 1918. He earned doctorates in philosophy and theology, founded the Militia Immaculata to convert sinners and oppose Freemasons, and established a religious publishing press. He also founded monasteries in Poland, Japan, and India.

World War II broke out and Maximilian opened a temporary hospital inside the monastery in Poland. Despite being arrested and released by the Germans, he refused to sign documentation of German heritage, instead electing to hide as many as 2,000 Jews at the friary throughout the war.

On February 17, 1941, Kolbe was arrested. He was held in a prison and transferred 3 months later to Auschwitz. Kolbe continued to act as a priest, despite severe violence and harassment. After another prisoner escaped Auschwitz, ten men were chosen by a camp commander to die of starvation. Kolbe requested to take the place of a man crying for his family. His request was honored, and he entered Block 11, where he would pray with the other prisoners. After two weeks of deprivation of food and water, Maximilian and three others remained alive. They were subjected to death by injection of carbolic acid. Kolbe simply offered his arm and calmly awaited death.

St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe was canonized by Pope Saint John Paul II. The man whose place Kolbe took, Franciszek Gajowniczek, survived the Holocaust and was present at Kolbe's beatification and canonization. St. Kolbe is considered a martyr of charity.

A word from St. Kolbe:

"If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion."

Find out more:

Websites: saintmaximiliankolbe.com
Formed.org: Life for Life: Maximilian Kolbe
Podcast: Saints Alive