

## DAY 13 - To Be an Instrument — Rather, to be Instruments

Again, St. Maximilian didn't just want to ask for graces from the Immaculata. He wanted to be the graces of the Immaculata. He didn't just want to do the will of the Immaculata. He wanted to be the will of the Immaculata. Wait, be the graces and the will of the Immaculata? Isn't this a bit too much? Not according to Kolbe's reasoning. He figured, "Well, if people can give themselves over to Satan to be possessed by him and be his instruments of evil, why can't people give themselves over to God to be possessed by him and be his instruments of love?" He further reasoned that, more than anyone, the Immaculata is "possessed" by the Holy Spirit,<sup>47</sup> so why not ask to be "possessed" by her so as to be perfectly united to God's will? In other words, it wasn't enough for him just to be Mary's "slave," as St. Louis de Montfort often put it. He wanted something deeper. He wanted to be an instrument in the hands of the Immaculata.

To be an instrument in the hands of the Immaculata. This is the central idea to Kolbe's whole vision of Marian consecration. Thus, he writes it directly into his prayer of consecration, "Let me be a fit instrument in your immaculate and merciful hands." To what purpose? The conversion of the entire world.

Come on. Kolbe is getting a little carried away, right? I mean, what can one man do? But this gets to his main point, his master strategy. His own piece wasn't the only part of his master plan. In fact, he wanted to raise up a whole army of fighting knights and soldiers who give themselves to be instruments in the grace-filled hands of the Immaculata. He wanted to build a "Militia Immaculata," which he describes as follows:

The Knights of the Immaculata seek to become ever more truly the property of the Immaculata; to belong to her in an ever more perfect way and under every aspect without any exception. They wish to develop their understanding of what it means to belong to her so that they may enlighten, reinvigorate, and set on fire the souls living in their own environment, and make them similar to themselves. They desire to conquer these souls for the Immaculata, so that in their turn they may belong to her without reserve and may in this manner win an ever greater number of souls to her — may win the entire world, in fact, and do so in the shortest possible time.

What genius! Notice the brilliant logic that undergirds Kolbe's whole strategy: If we really love God, if we truly long to work for his kingdom, then we should find the quickest and easiest way to become saints, and thereby return to him. Now, the quickest and easiest way to do this — as we learned from de Montfort — is through Marian consecration.

Yet Kolbe takes it further: He didn't just stop with himself. He didn't keep the great saint-making secret to himself. Look at it this way: What's better, one saint or two? A thousand saints or a million? Think of what a million saints fully consecrated to Mary could do. Imagine if Mary had a million instruments through whom she could fulfill the perfect will of God. It's an amazing thought. So, Kolbe exclaims, "Teach others this way! Conquer more souls for the Immaculata!" If this is the quickest, easiest way to become a saint, then it's also the quickest, easiest way to conquer the whole world for Christ, if only we teach others about it. So, Kolbe says, "Let's get to work!" Yes, let's begin by learning to live this consecration ourselves, and then bring others into it.

Okay, so first things first. We need to learn to live this consecration to the Immaculata. We need to “belong to her in an ever more perfect way.” How do we do this? Simple. We learn to love the Immaculata. How? By relying on her powerful intercession, experiencing her tender care, speaking to her from our hearts, letting ourselves be led by her, having recourse to her in all things, and trusting her completely. Yes, we should especially trust in the Immaculata and be happy in her. We should follow the example of Kolbe, related to us by one of his religious brothers.

When things ... were going well, he rejoiced with all his heart with everyone and fervently thanked the Immaculata for the graces received through her intercession. When things went badly he was still happy and used to say, “Why should we be sad? Doesn’t the Immaculata, our little mother, know everything that’s going on?”

Tomorrow, we’ll learn more about Kolbe’s form of consecration to “our little mother.” Today, let’s end by reflecting on his words: “My dear, dear brothers, our dear little, little mother, the Immaculate Mary, can do anything for us. We are her children. Turn to her. She will overcome everything.”

Today’s Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit, living in Mary. Prepare me to be a fit instrument in the hands of the Immaculata.