

Dear Parishioners, Friends, and Visitors to the Cathedral,

Born in Poland in 1894, this Monday's Saint, Maximillian Kolbe, took seriously the words of our Lord who said: "No one has greater love than this, than to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13), and became a martyr of charity. His parents were fervent Catholics, with a deep devotion to the Blessed Mother, something he would come to adopt in his own life. As a young child, he got into the usual mischief that boys do, but after one particularly stern scolding from his mother, he went to prayer and asked Mary what sort of man he would be. She appeared to him and offered him a white crown and a red crown, asking if he would be willing to accept either of them – the white meaning he would persevere in purity, and the red meaning he would become a martyr. Maximillian accepted both.

This mystical experience had a profound effect upon him, and at the age of 13 he entered the minor seminary of the Franciscans. He excelled at his studies, in particular math and physics, but rather than pursue a career in the sciences, he became a Franciscan novice in 1910. Shortly before his ordination to the priesthood in 1918, Maximillian formed the Crusade of Mary Immaculate. Its aim was to convert sinners, heretics, schismatics, and freemasons in particular, back to the Catholic faith, as well as spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He developed tuberculosis, which would eventually destroy one of his lungs and weaken the other, and while he did recover from it, he was left with frail health for the rest of his life. Throughout the 1920s he worked to spread the Catholic faith throughout Poland through a Catholic magazine he founded called 'Knight of the Immaculate.' In 1930, he moved to Japan, and in order to continue his work of spreading the Gospel and devotion to the Immaculate Mother, he founded a Japanese Catholic Press, along with a radio station. Maximillian would make several other journeys to India, Moscow, and Siberia, to further his evangelizing work before returning to Poland in 1936.

In 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland and Father Kolbe was arrested, and then released a short time later. During the period that he was not incarcerated, he organized shelters for thousands of Polish refugees, including Jews, and raised his voice in defense of the Truth through the 'Knight of the Immaculate'. In 1941, he was arrested again and sent to the concentration camp at Auschwitz.

While a prisoner at Auschwitz, a fellow captive in his cell block escaped one evening, and as a reprisal, ten random prisoners were chosen to die to deter future escape attempts. Among them was a Polish army sergeant, who upon being chosen, begged for his life. At this Maximillian Kolbe dared to step out of line and said: "I would like to take his place, he has a wife and children." The guard asked him sneeringly, "who are you", to which Maximillian replied, "I am a priest." Somewhat dumbfounded, the guard kicked the Polish sergeant out of line and put Kolbe in his place. The ten condemned men were marched off to an empty cell block, and locked in the dark to starve to death.

Over the next two weeks, as the men suffered from starvation and neglect, St. Maximillian encouraged them, prayed with them, and spoke to them of the love and goodness of God, and his own devotion to Mary. Finally, the cell block was needed for new prisoners, so the Nazis injected the remaining prisoners with carbolic acid to end their lives. Kolbe was the last to die, sitting in the corner in prayer. As they approached him with the needle, he lifted his fleshless arm to accept his fate. Saint Maximillian Kolbe died on the eve of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in 1941. He was canonized in 1982, and present at his canonization was the Polish army sergeant for whom he had laid down his life.

*Father Sean Ralph*



## The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist

1007 Superior Ave. E

Cleveland OH 44114-2582

<http://SaintJohnCathedral.com>

216-771-6666

**Jubilee Year of Fatima** - In observance of the Jubilee Year of the Fatima Apparitions, the Cathedral will host the official Diocesan touring statue of Our Lady of Fatima from August 10, through the Solemnity of the Assumption on August 15. This will give Cathedral parishioners and the faithful of downtown Cleveland, the opportunity to obtain the Plenary Indulgence, by fulfilling the necessary requirements **this Sunday, August 13th**. The rosary will also be recited after every Mass on Sunday. Information on the requirements for obtaining indulgence, Fatima prayers, blessed rosaries, and scapulars will be available in the main vestibule. We hope many will avail themselves of this special opportunity.

## The Solemnity of the Assumption



Tuesday, August 15, is the Solemnity of the Assumption and a **Holy Day of Obligation**.  
Vigil Mass, August 14: 5:10 pm

Confessions at the usual week day times.

August 15: 7:15 am, 12:00 noon, & 5:10 pm.

**RCIA** - Know of someone interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith? If so, **Register Now** for the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) by contacting Carolyn Apperson-Hansen to schedule a registration appointment. Spread the word: most inquirers come to us through family and friends who might be interested. Weekly meetings begin on Tuesday, September 1st, from 6-8 pm. **Please contact Carolyn Apperson-Hansen to register by Sept. 1st at <capperson-hansen@dioceseofcleveland.org> or 216-771-6666 ext. 5620.**

**PIC Collection** - This weekend, August 12/13 is the Personal Items Collection (PIC) for the Homeless of Cleveland. Your purchased items of backpacks, underwear, socks, and toiletries do much to add dignity and basic comforts to those less fortunate among us. This is the perfect time for travelers to bring in collected hotel-sized toiletries. Cash donations will allow the Social Action Ministry to purchase these items on your behalf.

Save the date!

**Nautica Queen Cruise**

**October 1 - 5:00 pm**