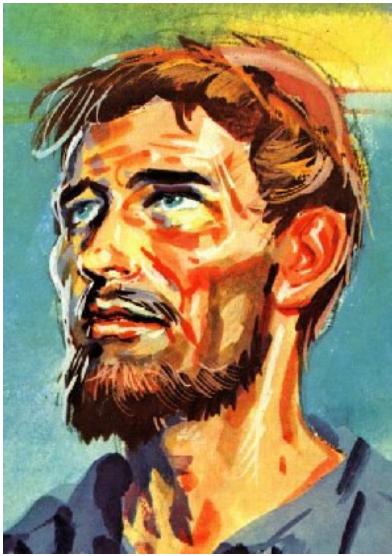


Lives
of
Saints

St Maximilian Mary Kolbe

1894 – 1941

Feast day: 14th August



“Let us, then, tell
the Blessed Virgin
that we are
content, and that
she can do with
us anything she
wishes.”

**St Maxmilian
Mary Kolbe**

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I was the second of three sons born to a poor but pious Catholic family in Russian occupied Poland. I was known as a mischievous child, sometimes considered wild, and a trial to my parents. However, in 1906, at age twelve and around the time of my first Communion, I received a vision of the Virgin Mary that changed my life.

I entered the minor seminary of the Conventual Franciscans in Lwow, Poland, in 1907, near my birthplace, and at 16 became a novice. Though I later achieved doctorates in philosophy and theology, I was deeply interested in science.

I was ordained at 24. I had a limitless, passionate desire to convert the whole world to God. I had already founded the Militia of the Immaculata, a religious magazine under Mary's protection to teach the Gospel to all nations. For the work of publication I founded the monastery of Niepolalanow, the City of the Immaculate. This housed 700 of my Franciscan brothers. I went to Japan in 1930 and India in 1932 and founded monasteries there. However, because I suffered from ill health, I had to return to Poland.

In 1939 the Nazi panzers overran Poland with deadly speed. Niepolalanow was severely bombed. My friars and I were arrested, then released in less than three months, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. In 1941 I was arrested again and sent to Auschwitz where I suffered terrible beatings and humiliations. I was Number 16670.

Less than three months later, the commandant announced that ten men would die, because a prisoner had escaped. I offered to take the place of one man who had a wife and children. We were to be starved to death. There was no screaming – we sang. By the eve of the Assumption four were left alive. The jailer came to finish me off as I sat in a corner praying. I was injected with carbolic acid. My body was later burned along with all the others.