



The Crib, Cross, and Crown

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The Franciscan Friars of Mary Immaculate

St. Maximilian Kolbe Friary
1116 Iriquois Street
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IN HANC SIGNUM CRUCIS VINCIS

The Lenten Season

by Fr. David-Ladislaus Przedwiecki O.F.M.

Oh Brothers, Look at your king! Do you see His throne? Is it of gold and silver and plush with velvet? Is He bedecked with finery and jewels? Is He crowned with emeralds? Is He seated majestically upon His seat of power? Is He smug and complacent in His audience room filled with the many admiring glances and envy of courtiers and princes? Are His knights in cautious stance around His footstool? Are there the sweet sound so music playing as royal visitors present themselves before His sovereignty? Oh Brothers, Look at your King! His throne is the splintered and splintered cross! It is stained with His blood. He is embarrassingly naked with barely a loin cloth. He wears the jewels of the nails in His hands and feet. He is crowned with prickly thorns that dig into his flesh and scalp. He is so painfully stretched out on the limbs of the tree of the cross as if His hands want to embrace us and His head bent to kiss us. His appearance is despised among men for he hangs there like a common criminal. His face is contorted with pain and muscles so taut with strain. He receives mockery from the hoarse voices of the mob who wave their fists at him in victorious satisfaction for their envy and hatred. The soldiers cast lots for His vesture and join in the mockery. The poke at him with their spears, they who just hours before scourged him, ripping His skin from its place. There is no music but the steady roar of the agitated crowd crying out their curses and showing their delight at His discomfort. The present themselves in haunting questions ridiculing His inability to save Himself from this hour of torment. ABOVE HIS HEAD IS WRITTEN HIS CRIME: JESUS OF NAZARETH KING OF THE JEWS!!

Can't they understand? Don't they see?! This pack of wild vicious dogs that surrounds him on every side! HIS KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD! His cross is not defeat but victory. It is not the end but the beginning.

A NEW MEXICAN THANKSGIVING

by Fr. David-Ladislaus O.F.M.

After the elation of the success of the first fund raiser of the O.F.M.I. Auxiliary at St. Cletus, Warren, Michigan on November 20, 1983, I thought I was still walking on air. We estimated at least six hundred people poured into St. Cletus Church to attend Mass on the Feast of Christ the King. How appropriate a feast for our venture's first fund raiser! Although I am a mere facilitator, a mere instrument in Our Lord's hands in forming this new community, I was asked to speak on behalf of this new venture which is to be formed in honor of Our Lady, the Queen in order to serve His Majesty Her King and ours. I simply talked of how the venture began and how it was now taking shape under the direction of Our Lady.

The auxiliary financed my trip the following day to Gallup, New Mexico in order that I could discuss with Bishop Jerome J. Hastrich, Bishop of Gallup, the necessary steps needed to see to it that the group of young men who were considering forming this new Franciscan Community would have a proper beginning. The bishop asked that I would come into his diocese in order to work also with his own seminarians.

There were two surprises awaiting me in Gallup: Sr. Rose Michael had arranged to meet me at the airport so that after my talks with Bishop Hastrich we would spend the Thanksgiving holiday in El Paso, Texas with friends of hers, and there was five inches of snow on the ground as we drove to Gallup. I had forgotten that Gallup was in the mountains about 8,000 feet above sea level.

My discussions with the bishop were very informative and bore much fruit. He was indeed anxious for us to begin working in his diocese in formation of this new Franciscan group. When I wasn't having conversations with either the bishop or the chancellor of Gallup, Fr. Raul Sanchez, we toured Gallup. We stayed at Christo Rey Seminary, a small, cozy, mission-style residence which also served as a residence for the bishop.

Some of the possibilities for a friary in New Mexico were

explored; a retreat center in beautiful mountain setting overlooking Gallup, a former high school building, once the only Catholic high school in the diocese among them. We managed to include on our tour Gallup's beautiful cathedral, the Brothers of the Good Shepherd, the Catholic hospital, and St. John Vianney Parish.

Our trip to Gallup was quite successful and pleasant. We accomplished that which we set out to do and were quite satisfied. After our business was concluded in Gallup, Sr. Rose Michael and I drive down to El Paso. If anyone hasn't been out west, they are in for a pleasant surprise. There is such a vastness in the scenery and such sharp contrast. There is desert, there are mountains, there is sun and there is snow. Once in El Paso, the weather got warmer, but traveling back into New Mexico in the mountains, to Sierra Blanca, Reinoso, Alamodoro, we drove through snow storms, through mountain passes, through pine forests and all sorts of fresh mountain streams.

We made many new friends while visiting El Paso through Sr. Rose Michael. Many new opportunities for future apostolates of our future brothers in the O.F.M.I. We do not know what the future brings. Yet, if we are faithful to God's calling, to our Holy other Church's teaching, close to Our Blessed Lord in the Holy Eucharist, and affectionate sons of Our Blessed Mother Mary; I cannot see how we could fail in this venture.

INVESTITURE

by John Morse

February 1st and 2nd are two dates that have gone down as very important ones in the history of Saint Maximilian Kolbe Friary.

On Friday, February 1st, Steven Mudd and Edward Gajewski became novices in the Third Order of Friars of Mary Immaculate, while John Morse and John Kirsch took their first steps in become Franciscan Tertiaries as postulants in the Order of Friars of Mary Immaculate.

Members of the Third Order of Friars of Mary Immaculate Auxiliary, friends and family were on hand to witness the investiture of Steven Mudd and Edward Gajewski. The investiture ceremony is as old as the Franciscan Order. During the ceremony, the candidates renounce the "old man and put on the new". This includes putting on religious Third Order habits and taking on religious names. Edward Gajewski took the name Brother Francis Solanus and Steven Mudd took the name Brother Joachim. Both have had previous experience in Franciscan religious orders and both were given the names that they previously had.

All the auxiliary members brought something to eat and after the ceremony was finished, the food and coffee were served.

On February 2nd, in the morning, John Morse and John Kirsch became postulants in the Order of Mary Immaculate in a private ceremony. Each received a tunic and later a cord.

All four of these young men, God willing, in the future will become priests after going to Christendom College for their novitiate studies. Please keep them and the rest of the community in your prayers.

SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE OUR PATRON SAINT

by Bro. Joachim

One of the reasons we chose Saint Maximilian Kolbe for our patron saint is his great love for our dear Blessed Mother, which we all must strive to imitate. Raymond Kolbe, later known as Father Maximilian, was born on January 6, 1894. At the age of ten, Raymond was just as mischievous as any child his age, which caused his mother to ask of him one day, "My poor child, what will become of you?" Now this little scolding made young Raymond very upset. One day while in prayer, he asked Our Lady what would become of him. The Mother of God appeared to him holding two crowns. One white, signifying purity. The other red, signifying that one day he would die martyr's death. After being asked which one he would like, Raymond simply replied, "I choose both." Three years later, he entered the Conventual Franciscan minor seminary in Lwow, Poland.

Raymond was such a gifted student that by the age of twenty-one, he had already acquired a doctorate in philosophy. A year after his ordination, which was in 1918, he earned another in theology. Meanwhile, he had formed a group of friars that called themselves Soldiers of Knights of Mary Immaculate. In the beginning, the group just prayed and handed out Miraculous Medals; but, as the group grew, so did their apostolic visions. They decided to publish a magazine to spread the Gospel and save souls. The first issue was a big success. In only four years time, the magazine subscriptions jumped from 5,000 copies to 50,000.

The group experienced continuous increase in members, so the group had to buy enough land to accommodate them. After Father Maximilian had found the land he was looking for, he placed a nice statue of our Blessed Mother on it. But when the Franciscan Provincial learned of certain conditions for acquiring the land, he refused permission to accept it. After the owner heard of this, he asked Father Maximilian what he should do with the beautiful statue that was placed in his field. Father simply replied, "Let it remain where it is." The owner thought for a moment, then told Father he could have the land with no strings attached.

So on the feast of the Presentation, 1927, two priests and eighteen friars arrived on the site of what was to become *Niepokalanow* (City of the Immaculate). By 1939, their group had grown to more than 750 friars and they were printing up to a million copies each month of their magazine. But 1939 was also the year that Hitler began World War Two with a devastating attack on Poland. It wasn't long before Father Kolbe was arrested for his strong opposition towards the Nazis. While imprisoned, Father Kolbe encouraged his fellow brothers by telling them they would be set free, and on the feast of the

Immaculate Conception his prediction came to pass. Father Kolbe had no illusions. He knew that the Nazis would return for him, and that he had much to accomplish before they did. He rushed back to a ransacked and plundered *Niepokalanow* to establish a haven for refugees. He introduced Perpetual Adoration, and published on last issue of his beloved magazine. He wrote in it, "No one in the world can alter truth. All we can do is seek it and live it." On February 17, 1941, the Nazis rearrested Father Kolbe for the suspicion of being an enemy of the Third Reich. Father Kolbe was first taken to jail in Warsaw where he was severely beaten. It wasn't till later that they transferred him to Auschwitz. Father Kolbe's battered body didn't last long under the back-breaking labor of the death camp. The little food he received, he shared with those he felt were less fortunate than himself.

In July of 1941, a prisoner slipped away from a labor detail at Auschwitz. If he wasn't found within a twenty-four hour period, ten of the 600 men in his cellblock would be put to death in reprisal. The next day, the men of cellblock 14 were made to stand at attention in the blazing hot sun from morning roll call 'till 6 o'clock that evening. Many of the frightened men were weak from the tiny amounts of food they received. Some fainted and were kicked until they stumbled to their feet. Those who didn't have the strength to rise were simply piled in a heap for disposal.

At 6 o'clock p.m., the camp commander, Colonel Fritsch, made his random selection of ten men. Some of them wept. One of them, Francis Gajowiczek, cried out, "My poor wife and children. I'll never see them again." This statement provoked Father Kolbe to step forward. And, pointing toward Francis Gajowiczek, he told Commandant Fritsch that he was volunteering to die for the grief-stricken man. The stunned commandant asked Father Kolbe who he was. Father simply replied, "A Catholic priest." After a moment's hesitation, Fritsch mumbled in a hoarse whisper, "All right! Go with them."

As the S.S. Guard shut the door to the starvation bunker, he remarked, "You will dry up like tulips." But, this time it was different. Instead of the guards hearing of the usual wailing and cursing, they heard hymns and songs of praise. After a few days, the guards, who had seen hundreds die, refused to go near this death cell. The victims died slowly and silently. After two weeks, only four of them were still alive, and of these, Father Kolbe was the last to live. It was as if he had to help each soul pass through its final trial before he, himself, would be set free. So, on the 15th day of his agony, August 14, the vigil of our Blessed Mother's Assumption into Heaven, orders were given to finish him off. When the soldier came with a syringe containing carbolic acid, Father Kolbe was smiling. His weakened lips were praising Mary with a final "Ave" as he held out his arm for the fatal injection.

Saint Maximilian, the martyr, was also known for his great contributions to Mariology. He recognized that if Mary had not given her "Fiat" to Almighty God, how could the Word become flesh upon our altars everyday during the Holy Sacrifice of the

Mass.

Finally, a contributing reason why we chose Saint Maximilian Kolbe as our Patron Saint, is that he is the most recent of our Franciscan brothers to be raised to the honors of the altar by Holy Mother Church. *Pax et Bonum*.

THE BEGINNING

by John Kirsch

On January 15, 1984, five young men began their orientation program which would eventually make them postulants and novices in the Order of Friars of Mary Immaculate.

There to greet them at the house of Our Lady of Loreto were Father David-Ladislaus Przedwiecki, O.F.M., Sister Germaine Fournier, Stella Evanchuck, David Kurtz, and officers of the Order of Friars of Mary Immaculate Auxiliary.

During the day, everyone was given a tour of the house of Our Lady of Loreto. They were also treated by the auxiliary to a fine buffet dinner, rosary in the chapel and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Finally, to top off the evening, there was showing of slides of Fr. David's recent trip to New Mexico.

The five young men who initiated the community were John Morse, Steven Mudd, Edward Gajewski, Vincent Cusumano, and John Kirsch. A brief biography of each is:

John Morse – Age 25, of Royal Oak, Michigan. John's reason for joining the religious life "is to love and serve God". John first saw Fr. David at St. Cletus' Church and couldn't believe there were still orthodox Catholic priests around.

Steven Mudd – Age 24, of Louisville, Kentucky. "To know, love and serve God", was Steve's reason for wanting to become a Franciscan. Steve first heard about Father David through his old novice master and came to visit him last November.

Edward Gajewski – Age 30, of Detroit, Michigan. "To dedicate in a most perfect manner, my life to Jesus and Mary, for the salvation of souls", are Ed's reasons for working for God. Ed met Fr. David over a year ago and went on a Holy Year pilgrimage with him. This included visitations to the great shrines of Our Lady of Knock, Lourdes, and Fatima.

Vincent Cusumano – Age 23, of Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan. "To try to get closer to God", is Vincent's reason for turning to the religious life. Vincent first met Father David at the St. Hyacinth church rectory and then became interested in the religious life.

John Kirsch – Age 28, of Harbor Beach, Michigan. "God has pulled me out of so many scrapes and done so much for me. I just want to give what I can back to Him", were John's reasons for joining the order. He first became aware of Fr. David through a family friend and sometime after meeting Fr. David in Lansing, he decided to join Fr. David's group.

These young men have given up friends and family, and in

today's society that is difficult to do. Please keep these and all vocations in your prayers.

THE LORETO HOUSE OF DETROIT

by Bro. Solanus – O.F.M.I.

This is how the Loreto house came to be. A brief account of the past shows us that God has selected Sister Loreta to obtain the house and retain it for religious usage in the future. After Sister Loreta completed work at Mercy Hall, she decided she couldn't spend the rest of her life in a rocking chair. So, through inspiration, she decided to form a residence for retired ladies who wished to spend the remainder of their lives in the service of God. She made a novena to St. Joseph during which time she had three homes in consideration. On the last day of the novena, March 19, the oblates of St. Francis called to her to say their home was available for her. She met Fr. Raymond Navarre, signing a lease-contract. Sister moved in and with great difficulty and many repairs, the house was made ready. The first holy Mass was celebrated in the chapel on December 8, 1971, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. On Christmas Day, Midnight Mass was celebrated by a saintly priest from Rome. His name was Fr. Angelino. He blessed the house and as he was doing so, he looked around and said "A great light will shine from this house for the city of Detroit and for the whole world." Through the years, Sister was able to become affiliated with the Holy House of Loreto in Ancona, Italy.

One of the residents, Josephine Kumor, who was very devout and prayerful was going blind from cataracts forming on her eyes. She told Sister Loreta that during the night she felt something falling from her eyes. The next morning, she regained her eyesight. She was not medically examined regarding this prodigy but this account is based on Human testimony and personal witness.

Presently, Sister Germaine and Stella Evanchuk remain in the house and help out with its upkeep and management. Sister Loreta died August 23, 1982 at the age of 87. Sister Germaine has related this information to me and she ends with saying "By the grace of God we have been able to continue to manage the house in the past, despite many hardships."

ABRAHAM AND JOB

By. Fr. David-Ladislaus Przedwiecki O.F.M.

February had been on a teeter-totter of weather somewhat reflecting the turn of events affecting my role in this venture of Our Lady. As a member of Assumption Province, I am obligated by the vow of obedience to go where I am sent. This obligation by virtue of the vow was several times referred to by my Provincial, Fr. William Gulas O.F.M. For the last two years, Fr. William has patiently listened to me describe the work of the O.F.M.I. and its progress. On February 10, 1984, Fr. William saw me at Orchard Lake and was quite positive and affirmative in his evaluation of my involvement in this venture. I invited Fr.

William to visit us at the House of Loreto on February 19, 1984. Nine days difference found Fr. Gulas switch surprisingly from the warmth of affirmation to the chill of fear that I, perhaps as a representative member of Assumption Province working with this group, was too intimately bound up with its direction, its formation and foundation.

It would be well worth our while to review some basic facts in the form of some response to these accusations of disobedience from my superior. First of all, none of the young men who are Third Order members living together at Loreto House need fear that they are doing anything against Canon Law of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. There is no canon which in any way states that Third Order members, if they live a communal life, internally, privately and without any external apostolate in a given diocese. There is also no law forbidding these men to live on the donations of other laymen who wish to support them in a sense of Christian charity. There is also no law which prohibits a validly ordained priest, in good standing with his order and the current diocese in which he resides and within which he functions having been given faculties for the administration of the sacraments, from giving council to, praying and eating with them, and teaching Third Order members, during their novitiate, necessary courses in preparation for profession in the Third Order. Nothing illegal is being done.

In correspondence dated March 3, 1984, my Provincial has informed me that I must spend all of my free time eating, sleeping, and recreating at St. Hyacinth. Also, that I was not, in any way, to continue to involve myself with the direction of the group. The letter did not specify if I could continue to visit my brothers during my free time, praying with them and teaching them. I have asked for a clarification.

My visit with Archbishop Szoka took place shortly after my Provincial's visit to Loreto House. The archbishop showed an amazingly similar concern for the same issues as my Provincial. Yet, the archbishop was gentlemanly and kindly. He did not forbid me to continue my activity although he wanted to assure me that he only tolerates this (Third Order group) in his diocese. He admitted to me that I am not doing anything which he could prevent by evoking canon law. After having consulted with three canon lawyers in the matter previously, I know that we were on safe grounds in forming a community, informally and without a canonical recognition before we went to Gallup, in order to prove ability in living together and stability in retaining a community.

Since my role was one of spiritual advisor and spiritual director, I also knew that I was on sure ground in visiting the House of Loreto. The law may only refer itself to external legal realities. Spiritual matter, whatever the spiritual realities might be, are left up to God.

Well, my brother, the persecution has begun. I imagine that, due to our success or promise of success, my Provincial having seen the fine group of decent, clean-cut, sincere, and joyous young men at the House of Loreto, at St. Maximilian Kolbe Friary, he began to have second thoughts about my involvement with a

group destined for New Mexico, maintaining that everything we were searching after in religious life was to be found in his Assumption Province.

Yet, in all of this, I want to cultivate two virtues, the virtue of obedience and patience. I have agreed to return more often to the rectory until specifics as to the use of free time is to be legislated by the order. Also, I must show patience to those who seem so threatened by this little venture of Our Lady. The option of disobeying is nonexistent for me since I am trying to live as a real Franciscan. However, perhaps God is calling me now from the Haran of Assumption to the desert of Gallup. I must pray on this and all of you must join my prayers.

As Abraham, we have to show the same virtue of faith. Like Job, we must be challenged by trials, not for God's good pleasure, but for our own reassurance of the security of our faith in God. As Job cried after having been stripped of everything of earthly value, "The Lord gives and the Lord takes; if we have accepted the good things from the Lord, can we not accept the bad? BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!"

KALENDARZ – ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE – CALENDAR

November 20, 1983 – O.F.M.I. Auxiliary kickoff fund raiser for Third Order members of the Confraternity of Franciscans of Mary Immaculate.

November 21, 1983 – Fr. David O.F.M. arrives in Gallup, New Mexico. Conferences with Bishop Jerome J. Hastrich D.D.

November 22, 1983 – Tour of Gallup and environs.

November 23, 1983 – Fr. David accompanies Sr. Rose Michael S.L. To El Paso, Texas.

November 24, 1983 – Fr. David travels to Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

January 15, 1984 – Reception of candidates and their families at House of Loreto and St. Maximilian Kolbe Friary.

January 22, 1984 – Entire group goes to Pro-Life Rally, attending Mass at St. Mary's Greektown. Fr. David speaks on the morality of abortion.

February 1, 1984 – Investiture of Edward Gajewski and Stephen Mudd into the Third Order Franciscan Fraternity.

February 2, 1984 – Induction of John Morse and John Kirsch into postulancy of the Third Order.

February 10, 1984 – Conference with Fr. William Gulas O.F.M. Minister Provincial of Assumption Province, Pulaski, Wisconsin.

February 19, 1984 – Visitation of Fr. William Gulas O.F.M., Fr. Neil Kaminski O.F.M., Vicar Provincial, Fr. Francis Skalski, Pasotr of St. Hyacinth; Fr. Boleslaus Krol S.J., Assistant Pastor of St. Hyacinth, Detroit; to the House of Loreto.

February 22, 1984 – Audience with Archbishop Edmund Szoka,

D.D. JCL and Fr. David O.F.M.

March 5, 1984 – Brothers attend auxiliary meeting.

March 9, 1984 – Fr. David gives a retreat for youth at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Wyandotte, MI.

March 11, 1984 – Meeting with Fr. Wegner of Opus Sanctorum Angelorum.

March 14, 1984 – Retreat for adults at Our Lady of Czestochowa, Sterling Heights, MI.

March 18, 1984 – Group attends talk in Howell, Michigan, Fr. David giving a talk on Mary to K of C's.

March 19, 1984 – Fr. David conducts retreat at House of Loreto. Members attend.

March 20, 1984 – Fr. David conducts service and speaks at St. Keiran's, Utica, MI.

March 21, 1984 – Fr. David installs Pilgrim Virgin at St. Daniel's Parish, Clarkston, MI. Group attends.

April 6, 1984 – Fr. David preaches at overnight vigil in Saginaw area to be announced later.

April 1, 1984 – Brothers are taking off on their journey west to visit with Bishop Hastrich and discuss our entrance into his diocese.

April 10, 1984 – Fr. David conducts talks for League of Catholic Women.

April 22, 1984 – Easter Sunday, departure for eastern trip, Christendom.