

The Happiness of all Humanity in God through the Immaculata

St. Maximilian left behind a simple account of the first steps that resulted in the founding of the Militia of the Immaculata (MI). He emphasized how initially the association began with three fellow students of the International Seraphic College, during their summer vacation. Eventually other young friars joined them. Let us listen to St. Maximilian's own memories of that historical October 16, 1917:

“Thus, with the consent of the Fr. Rector, on October 16, 1917, the first meeting of the first seven members took place, namely: (1) Fr. Iosif Pal, a young priest of the Romanian Province; (2) Br. Antoni Głowiński, deacon of the Romanian Province (d. October 18, 1918); (3) Br. Girolamo Biasi, from the Province of Padua (d. 1929); (4) Br. Quirico Pignalberi, of the Roman Province; (5) Br. Antonio Mansi, of the Province of Naples (d. October 31, 1918); (6) Br. Enrico Granata, of the Province of Naples; (7) myself.

“The meeting took place at night, in secret, in a locked, inner cell that was constructed by means of a temporary wall. In front of us there was a little statue of the Immaculata between two lighted candles. Br. Girolamo Biasi acted as secretary. The purpose of this first meeting was the discussion of the “program of the MI” (the enrollment form), especially since Fr. Alessandro Basile, who was also confessor to the Pope [Benedict XV], had promised he would ask the Holy Father for a blessing of the MI” (KW 1278).

From the start, the plan outlined in the original charter of the MI is exciting and universal: “To reach out to so many unhappy souls, in order to strengthen innocent hearts in goodness, in order to help everyone draw nearer to the Immaculata, Mediatrix of all graces” (cf. KW 1328). In other words, the MI plan is to work tirelessly for “The happiness of all humanity in God through the Immaculata” (KW 1088).

Yes, the young Maximilian was already an intelligent and creative strategist, an enthusiastic leader, able to bring others to get involved. Above all, he was a daring and passionate disciple of the Lord, who desired ardently *the greatest* glory of God, the spreading of His Kingdom “on earth as it is in heaven,” and the authentic happiness of each person in Him Who is its only true source – and this, through the Immaculata.

Through the Blessed Virgin Mary, Maximilian encountered the Lord Jesus and in Him the living Water of eternal Life (cf. Jn 4:14), which has to be shared with everyone. At the foot of the Cross, Mary was the first one to welcome Jesus' thirst, the thirst of the Crucified Love to quench the thirst of our hearts, and Maximilian wanted the MI to be a docile and generous instrument in Our Lady's hands for the fulfilling of this dream: the happiness of all people in God.

If the word “happiness” appears constantly in his *Writings*, we can be sure it's not by mere chance! When later Maximilian would trace the portrait of the Knight of the Immaculata, he wrote that an MI member “does not confine his heart only to himself or to his family, his relatives, his neighbors, his friends, his fellow countrymen. Rather, along with them he embraces the whole world, each and every person individually, for all were redeemed by the Blood of Jesus without exception, and all are our brothers and sisters. He desires true happiness for all, enlightenment through the light of faith, purification from sin, a rekindling of the heart through love for God, a love that sets no limits” (KW 1088).

Let us be set ablaze by this passion for the true happiness of all humanity in God through the Immaculata! Let us make of it *our* dream, together, with the audacity of St. Maximilian, by inviting others to a deeper relationship with Jesus through consecration to Our Lady.

ADP