

**Love in The Face of Suffering**

**I. PSALM 27:1-5**<sup>1</sup> <A PSALM of King David>

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the strength of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?...

<sup>3</sup> Though an host should encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear:  
though war should rise against me,  
in this will I be confident.

<sup>4</sup> One thing have I desired of The LORD,  
that will I seek after;  
that I may dwell in The House of The LORD  
all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of The LORD,  
and to enquire in His Temple.

<sup>5</sup> For in the time of trouble He shall hide me...  
in The Secret [Place] of His Tabernacle...

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<sup>1</sup> 1, KJV, PSALM 27:1-5.

## **II. Saint Maximilian Kolbe**

Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe was born on 1/08/1894 in Poland. He became a Franciscan and was ordained as a Catholic Priest in 1918. He established an Order dedicated to Mary. He was a Missionary to Japan. And During WWII, he was imprisoned by the Nazis at Auschwitz and was martyred there.<sup>2</sup>

In that horrific place, Father Kolbe cared for his fellow prisoners, for The LORD was his light and salvation. He celebrated The Catholic Mass in secret and ministered to all whom GOD placed in his path. One day a prisoner escaped. A certain number of men were chosen to die in reprisal. One man chosen to die was a young married man with children.<sup>3</sup>

Father Maximilian stepped forward and offered his life in the place of this young family man. Father Kolbe was slowly starved with other prisoners over 2 weeks. When he was the last alive in the starvation bunker, but still lived, he was put to death with a lethal injection.<sup>4</sup> His greatest act of sacrificial giving was in offering up his own life to save the life of another. He died on 8/14/1941.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> 2, Magnificat, Volume 11, Number 6, August 2009, Friday 14<sup>th</sup>, Mass, Friday of The Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time, p 184. "Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe – Memorial."

<sup>3</sup> 3, Pope John Paul II, "Homily at The Canonization of St. Maximilian Kolbe," Introduction.

<sup>4</sup> 3, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> 2, Magnificat, Volume 11, Number 6, August 2009, Friday 14<sup>th</sup>, Mass, Friday of The Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time, p 184. "Saint Maximilian Mary Kolbe – Memorial."

### **III. Gifts of Love in The Face of Suffering**

What is the measure of love in the face of suffering? I think it is this: Following His Savior, Saint Kolbe chose to lay down his life for the saving of another. In a way, we as Chaplains are called to lay down their lives in Love for those whom GOD places daily in our paths. The hospital minister is called to surrender himself for the sake of others, so that others can have a time and place to share the cry and stories of their hearts, and to draw closer to The comforting Presence of The Divine.

There was an elderly man found unresponsive face down in town recently who ended up in the ICU on a ventilator. As his identity was unknown initially, he was registered under a trauma case number with no name. But with the help of the police, the man's son was found, and he was at his father's bedside that evening. He shared a little about his Dad, GB. There we prayed together for him, his family and his father. GB died the next day.

It was my privilege to, in a small way like Saint Maximilian Kolbe, lay down a small part of my self for the sake of GB and his son. I was called to hold open a Sacred Place of vigil at GB's bedside until his son arrived. His son then laid down his love for his Dad as he kept watch. And in that watch, The Beauty of The Lord JESUS CHRIST was laid down for all of us:

JOHN 15:12-13

<sup>12</sup> This is My Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

<sup>13</sup> Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

As we carry out our duties of Ministry today, let us remember that it is in the giving of ourselves to others in His Name that we most closely behold The Light, The Strength and The Beauty of The LORD. As King David beheld from a distance, so we enter in face to face, laying down small portions of ourselves for others, even as The Son of GOD did so for us.

**IV. A Prayer**

Let us come together before The LORD

Each according to our own Tradition.

The LORD be with you!

And also with you!

O GOD, we come before You as Your servants

confessing that You are our Light and our salvation.

We recall the ultimate sacrifice of self

given up by Father Kolbe to save the life of another.

As You send us forth today

to give ourselves for the sake of others in Your Name,

Keep us within The Tabernacle of Your Love,

that we may most clearly behold Your Beauty!

May we graciously receive Your Love

As others lay down a part of their lives for us,

And may we be open to those whom You place in our paths

To lay down a part of our lives for others.

AMEN.

Let us go forth to love and serve The LORD!

Thanks be to GOD!

**V. References**

1. “King James Version [Bible].” Bible Works 7. Bible Works, LLC. Norfolk, Virginia. 2006.
2. “Magnificat.” The Catholic Herald, Ltd. Yonkers, New York.
3. “Homily at The Canonization of St. Maximillian Kolbe.” His Holiness Pope John Paul II. October 10, 1982. The Work of GOD – The Saints. Retrieved 8/14/2009. <http://www.theworkofgod.org/Saints/Lives/MaxKolbe.htm>.