

## St. Maximilian Kolbe

Feast Day: August 14

St. Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish priest in the early 20th century during the turbulent times of World War II. When he was twelve, Our Lady appeared to him offering him two crowns: one red and one white. The white one represented purity and the red one represented martyrdom. Mary asked which one he would accept and he answered that he would accept them both. It was one year after this vision that St. Maximilian entered the order of the Conventual Franciscans and began preparing for the priesthood. As a priest, he traveled the world setting up religious communities and spread devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Upon his return to Poland, however, he was sent to a Nazi work camp in Auschwitz. The Nazis did not like Jews or Christians and would bring them to these camps where they would be tortured and in many cases killed. St. Maximilian had trust in God and showed great courage during this frightening time. One day, some Nazi soldiers came to his camp announcing that some prisoners would have to be killed in order to make up for a prisoner who had escaped. One of the men chosen begged to be spared, for he had a wife and family that he would be leaving behind. St. Maximilian volunteered to go in his place and was sent to a cell to starve. While in that cell, he brought the hope and peace of Christ to those around him and was the last one of his group to pass away.

