

## Father Maximilian Kolbe ~ Timeline

1894	Raymond Kolbe was born in Zdunska Wola, Poland, to a devout Roman Catholic family.
1906	He had a vision of the Virgin Mary which changed his life. He asked Mary what was to become of him, and learned that he was to become a martyr. He accepted this.
1907	He entered the seminary at Lwow in Poland. In 1910 he became a Franciscan novice and took the name of Maximilian. He was ordained priest in 1918 and returned to Poland the following year. He began to suffer from tuberculosis.
1917	He formed a group called “Knights of the Immaculate” which was dedicated to fighting for goodness, encouraging people to have interest in religion and to perform charitable works. They published a journal which was designed to ‘illuminate the truth and show the way to true happiness.’ This was extremely successful, yet also controversial. Some suggested that there was an anti-semitic tone to some of the articles.
1930	Maximilian travelled to Nagasaki, Japan and published the journal in Japanese. Here, he did not try to impose Christianity. He respected Buddhism and Shintoism, and looked for ways to engage in dialogue.
1936	He returned to Poland. As war approached, Maximilian prepared people to accept suffering with love. He was seriously ill by this time, but continued his work.
1939	The Second World War began. By September, the work of Maximilian’s community was stopped by the invading Germans and the monks were deported to Germany. They were released after three months. The monks continued publishing the journal and also helped Polish refugees, many of whom were Jews.
1941	Maximilian was arrested because he had started publishing again. He was taken to Pawiak prison in Warsaw, and then to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. He was prisoner 16770. His work group was supervised by vicious guards. His calmness and dedication to his faith brought him the worst jobs, and more beatings than anyone. Once he was beaten and left for dead. Smuggled to the prison hospital, he spent his recovery time hearing confessions. When he returned to the camp he carried on looking after the other prisoners, including conducting Mass, and giving his own food to prisoners. In June 1941, there was an escape from the camp. Nazi rules were that 10 men were killed for each escaper. Francis Gajowniczek, a married man with young children was chosen to die for the escape. Maximilian volunteered to take his place. He was taken to the underground starvation cell, and was the last of the men to die, killed by an injection of carbolic acid on August 14 <sup>th</sup> .
1981	He was canonized as martyr by Pope John Paul II.
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