



## Deacon Deliberations by Deacon Gary Kupsak

### “Greater Love Has No Man”

Many of you I'm sure recognize the above title of this reflection as a part of Sacred Scripture, “Greater love has no man than to give up his life for his friend” (John 15:13). We have seen time and time again men and women give up their lives so that others may live. We often see it on the field of battle, we see it when a parent gives up his or her life to save their child and we saw it multiple times when ordinary people gave their lives so that strangers could be evacuated from those ill-fated towers of 9/11. Tomorrow, August 14, 2017 is the feast day of Franciscan priest and martyr St. Maximilian Kolbe, whose National Shrine can be found just minutes away from St. Mary at Marytown, 1600 W. Park Ave., Libertyville, IL 60048. Kolbe is a special saint of mine because of his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and I often visit Marytown to pray before the always exposed blessed sacrament and beg for St. Max and Blessed Virgin to intercede for my many needs. I hope that all of you have had the opportunity to visit Marytown and St. Maximilian's shrine. There is a peace there, that you will hunger for and may find visits to Marytown to become more frequent.

Most of us know that Kolbe found himself in Auschwitz concentration camp in 1941 due to his writings about his faith and about the atrocities of the German army and Nazis. Due to being a member of the clergy, Kolbe was treated mercilessly by many of the guards, but ministered to hundreds in the prison in spite of his mistreatment directed at him for being so caring to others. Some prisoners escaped from the barracks that Kolbe was assigned to, so the German commander randomly selected 10 men who were to be starved to death in a dungeon. One of those selected cried out for mercy due to his being a husband and father. Kolbe, without hesitation took the man's place and during the two-week ordeal led the others in prayer. Kolbe took too long to die and was administered a lethal injection by the guards. St. Maximilian Kolbe was declared a martyr and canonized in 1981.

Most all of us will not be called upon to give up our lives so that another may live. But how many of us will be willing to lead our lives so that we are of service to others. How many of us who call ourselves disciples of Christ will give of ourselves, sacrifice what we have, what we enjoy doing so that others who may not be as fortunate as we are may have better lives. It isn't giving up your life so that another will live, but it is sacrificing, giving of yourself, being of service so that others may benefit by your actions.

“At the heart of silence is prayer.

At the heart of prayer is faith.

At the heart of faith is life.

At the heart of life is **service.**”

St. Theresa of Calcutta

“Greater love has no man than to give us his life for his friend.” Let's call on the Blessed Virgin Mary, on St. Maximilian Kolbe, on St. Theresa of Calcutta to intercede for us so that we too, may in our own way, and to the best of our capabilities give of ourselves, so others may flourish.

**Pax vobiscum (Peace be with you)**