

## Important Dates in the Life of Saint Maximilian Kolbe

March 1930

*In route to Japan*

At 4:00pm on Friday, March 7, 1930, as the freighter Angers weighed anchor, sirens screamed in salute, and the ship trembled as her giant motors went into operation. The friars, Zeno, Hilary, Zygmunt and Seweryn, were anxious to stand at the freighter's rail and watch the coastline recede. Maksymilian reminded them that they had not yet invoked the Immaculata's blessing upon their voyage. The five Franciscans went to their cabin for prayer while the port of Marseilles and the French coastline faded from view. After prayer they returned to the deck, but Europe was no longer in sight.

Maksymilian had tried to purchase tickets in fourth class, that is deck space, but he was unsuccessful. He therefore, purchased third class tickets, which would have placed him and his brothers in crowded accommodations. Despite the fact that they had paid for a third class booking only, a separate cabin was offered to the Franciscans. They were thus able to install a Niepokalanów aboard ship. Each morning at 5:00am, Maksymilian opened a portable altar in the first class dining hall. He drew up a daily schedule for his friars and for himself. At 5:00am Mass was celebrated, followed by breakfast and a session for prayer. A period each day was devoted to language study, discussion of apologetics and meditation. During the entire voyage he was in prayer at the hour that Mass was being celebrated at Niepokalanów.

As was his custom, whether on a park bench in Zakopane, in a train, in a carriage, or on a ship, Maksymilian engaged people in conversation, distributed the miraculous medal and propagandized for the Militia Immaculatae. The Angers had an international passenger list. Among others, Maksymilian solicited conversation from a Chinese, a Syrian, an Ethiopian, and a Russian. The Russian, a zealous theory of evolution of Darwin's, jostled vigorously with Maksymilian.

On Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, the Angers docked at Djibouti where Maksymilian and his friars went ashore and were entertained by the Capuchins. The next stop was Ceylon. On Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, the feast of St. Joseph, they went ashore at Colombo.

The companions went ashore in Singapore on Sunday, March 30th.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Foster, Claude R, *Mary's Knight* (West Chester University Press, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 2001) pgs. 332-337