



Meditation October 14, 2014

Father Kolbe: Go Forth!

Pope Francis' Message for World Day of Missions 2014 invites us to **go forth** in mission:

Today vast numbers of people still do not know Jesus Christ. For this reason, the mission ad gentes continues to be most urgent. All the members of the Church are called to participate in this mission, for the Church is missionary by her very nature: she was born "to go forth."

Father Kolbe was passionate about God *and* man. He did not consider the apostolate a question of tactic, but as a reflection of the abundant graces in a heart conquered by God through self-offering to the Immaculata. He said, "The apostolate is a noble work, very sublime. It is collaboration, if it is correct to say so, with God in perfecting, sanctifying, and making men happy."ⁱ

His health was fragile, but he could not stay still in the friary. He was burning with passion for the Kingdom of God and wanted to conquer the world for the Immaculata. He describes the profile of a missionary in a 1925 article:

*He doesn't restrict his heart solely to itself, nor to his family, parents, friends, fellow citizens, but embraces with them the whole world. They have all been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, without any exception; they are all our brothers... **The happiness of all humanity in God through the Immaculata: this is our ideal.***ⁱⁱ

Father Kolbe's missionary reach was incredible. His "gaze (was) continuously attracted by new horizons."ⁱⁱⁱ After only three years from the founding of Niepokalanów, he left for the Orient with four friars. He was compelled to give always more and to do always better so that the joy of the Gospel could reach the ends of the earth. He had a beautiful expression: "Not tomorrow, not even tonight, but immediately. Not a little, but all. Not only one region but the whole world."^{iv}

Until the end of his life, **he went forth toward the people in need.** He went forth toward Auschwitz where he was immersed in a hellish abyss, an abyss of hate. He went forth from the line to offer his life in place of the father of a family. He went forth even towards the starvation bunker to journey with his companions to die with dignity, singing the praises of the Lord, praying and begging forgiveness for their executioners.

Let us imitate his love that made the strength of the Gospel shine even in the shadows of evil. **May the light and joy of the Gospel reach darkest corners of the world.**

Angela Esposito
Community of Harmeze

ⁱ KW 1071

ⁱⁱ KW 1088

ⁱⁱⁱ KW 503

^{iv} KW 1325