



# Opening Prayer

*God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

*Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it;  
trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to his will,  
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with him forever in the next.*

*Amen.*

# Lesson Objectives:

- ❖ Reflect on what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God and identify the dignity and purpose of the human person.
- ❖ Understand sin as a distortion of God's original design, not merely rule-breaking but a rupture in our relationship with him.
- ❖ Address the difficult question of why God allows evil, and understand it as a privation of the good, in light of God's respect for human freedom and his greater plan of redemption.
- ❖ Unpack the meaning of Original Sin and its effects, recognizing God's immediate response: the promise of a Redeemer.

# BURNING QUESTIONS

❖ If God is good, why is there evil in the world?

*It is easy to look around and see death, pain, hatred, and so much more and wonder: Where is God?*

❖ Can I trust God with my well-being?

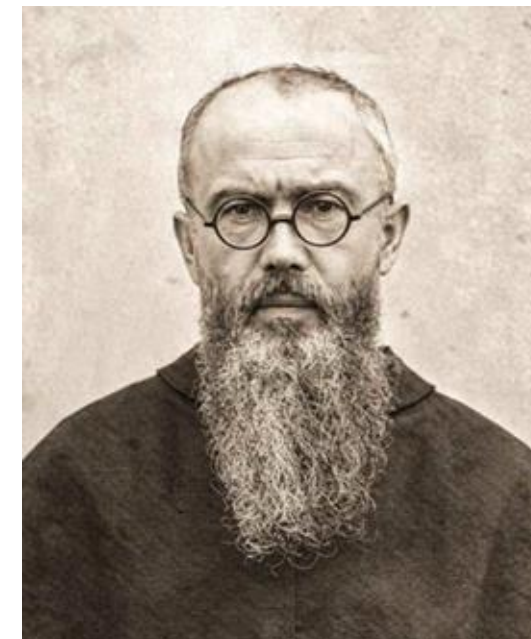
*How can God promise peace when so many good and innocent people suffer?*

# St. Maximilian Kolbe

**Feast Day: August 14**

January 8, 1894 – August 14, 1941 · Zduńska Wola, Poland · Patron of Journalists, Prisoners, Families

As a child, Maximilian Kolbe had a vision of the Virgin Mary offering him two crowns, one white for purity, one red for martyrdom, and he chose both. As a Franciscan priest, he founded the Militia Immaculata, published Catholic media, and sheltered Jewish refugees during the Nazi occupation of Poland. Arrested and sent to Auschwitz, his hour came when he stepped forward to take the place of a married father condemned to die of hunger. Instead of hatred, he chose love. He was canonized in 1982. The man he had saved was there.



*“May every fall, even if it is serious and habitual sin, always become for us a small step toward a higher degree of perfection.”*

St. Maximilian Kolbe

# Created Good

## Made in God's Image

God did not create a flawed universe. He created everything good, and he created us in his own image and likeness (see Genesis 1:26). Each person carries inherent dignity and the capacity for reason, love, and relationship with God. Creation is a gift, and you are the crown of it.

## The Dignity of the Human Person

Because we are made in God's image, every human being—regardless of sin, failure, or circumstance—possesses an unalterable dignity. The Fall wounded but did not destroy that image. God still sees us as precious.

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”*

Genesis 1:27



# The Fall

## How Sin Entered the World

God gave Adam and Eve freedom to love him or to turn away from him. The Serpent sowed doubt and distrust of God. They chose disobedience, and with this, sin entered the world. The consequences of the Fall affect all of us: suffering, death, and the attraction toward sin that we call concupiscence. This disordered condition in which we are all born is called Original Sin.

## The Fallen Angels

God created all things visible and invisible. In the invisible realm, there are angels: immortal spiritual beings, with intellect and will, created to serve God and carry his messages. There are also demons: fallen angels who rebelled against God and rejected his reign. The Bible tells us that they were cast from heaven. Unlike God, demons have limited power, and what they can do is under God's permission.

*“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”*

Romans 5:19

# God's Response: The Promise of a Redeemer

## The Fall of Mankind Was Not the End

Unlike the fallen angels, cast away for eternity, God responded to the Fall with mercy. Even as he announced the consequences of sin, he revealed his plan: a woman would bear a child who would crush the Serpent's head (see Genesis 3:15). This is the first proclamation of the Gospel in Scripture: the protoevangelium.

## The Good News

God's response to the mess is not abandonment; it is a rescue. From the beginning, his plan was redemption. Through Christ, the image of God will be restored and elevated within mankind, enabling us again, through grace, to grow in "likeness" to God.

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head."*

Genesis 3:15



## Discussion Questions

- ❖ How does the story of Creation affect the way you see yourself and your purpose?
- ❖ In what ways does learning about the Fall help you understand the presence of evil and suffering in the world?
- ❖ God's response to the Fall includes a promise of redemption. What would the world look like if God did not allow human beings to make bad choices? What would that say about God?

# Faith and Fun

What kind of fruit was the “forbidden fruit” that Adam and Eve ate in the Garden of Eden?

a. An apple

b. A fig

c. A pomegranate

d. The Bible doesn't say

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The sacred art most familiar to us often depicts the fruit as an apple plucked from the tree, but some ancient traditions hold that it was a pomegranate. This is an interesting idea to consider. An apple is easy to “take” and “eat,” as Genesis 3 says Eve did. In contrast, it takes time to cut open a pomegranate, remove the pith, and eat the seeds.

# Guardian Angels

## God Gives Us Companions for the Journey

The Church teaches without question that angels exist and encourages devotion to our guardian angels. Angels are spiritual beings created by God: his messengers and servants, with intellect and will, immortal, belonging to Christ (see CCC 329–331). The *Catechism* affirms: “Beside each believer stands an angel” (CCC 336, quoting St. Basil). Our guardian angels are entirely devoted to the one person God entrusts to their care throughout life.

## Devotion to Your Guardian Angel

Angels exist to guide, protect, and inspire us to grow in holiness and reach eternal life. Our devotion to them does not mean worship, when we speak about “praying to” our guardian angel. It means we ask for their intercession as we would do with a friend when we need help. We are grateful to them for their role in fulfilling God’s plan.

### Living It Out:

Pray the Guardian Angel Prayer each morning this week.



# Closing Prayer

*Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide.  
Amen.*

Guardian Angel Prayer

Announcements / Reminders — add notes here