



Director's Letter No. 9

by Fr. Karl Stehlin, Director of the Militia Immaculatae

Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Dear Knights of the Immaculata!

The jubilee year 2017 is drawing to a close. Many of you are wondering what happened this year. Many expected a special intervention from heaven, similar to the solar miracle 100 years ago in Fatima. Others longed for the whole of Fatima's third secret to be revealed, and we all wished so much that in this year Russia would be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. All these hopes were dashed. On the contrary, one could say that it looks worse than ever in the Church. Therefore, it is to be feared that after this year Fatima will more or less be forgotten by many.

But those who look a little deeper have to admit that the Immaculata has worked a lot during this jubilee year: at the beginning of the year there were about 20,000 knights in the M.I., and at the end of the year we are grateful to see that the Immaculata has answered our prayers and blessed our efforts by gathering 100,000 knights around her.

Mary's Mission Tour throughout the Philippines has given this country unspeakable graces, often associated with real miracles of her mercy. In many countries the M.I. has blossomed, together with a deepened Marian life on the part of many faithful. Never before have there been so many contacts with priests and religious who, attracted by the mystery of Fatima, have approached Tradition.

If we look even deeper, there is a very special grace which the Immaculata has given us: whoever has made a sincere effort this year, has been introduced by her more thoroughly into the mystery of her Heart. How many testimonies of this kind have we received: "Never before have I understood Mary so profoundly ... Never before have I experienced her love so much as this year... More than ever, I have come to realize how necessary she is in my whole life... Better than ever before have I been able to live my consecration to her"!

This year of the Fatima centennial gave us the revelation of what the most precious thing in Mary is: her Heart - full of grace, her Heart - given to us, which means that she wants to give everyone all graces of conversion and sanctification; she wants to pull us out of a sinful life and lead us to holiness. The centenary of the Militia Immaculatae has not only brought forth many new knights, but has also shown all of them how much they can trust their Lady and that through her, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost, all his gifts and fruits are placed in our hearts.

Whoever approached her this year did not seem surprised by her greatness and majesty, her royal power and maternal love, her great mercy.

However, it would be a big mistake to think: "We have meditated enough on Mary, now something else has to happen. Everything revolved around Fatima last year, now a change is necessary."

ON THE CONTRARY: if we were given a chance to penetrate the depth of Mary's Immaculate Heart, it is because Mary wants to draw us completely to herself in order to show us what motivates her motherly Heart. Mary never wants anything for herself! All the glory and honour given to her, she necessarily passes on to her Son: the very essence of the Immaculate Heart and the very purpose of all her sanctuaries and apparitions are to introduce us into the mystery of the Sacred Heart of her Son.

And this brings us to the new year 2018, which must become a journey of discovery, so to speak, during which the child can find the greatest treasure and the most precious pearl, under the guidance of his mother. She has only one wish: to make us plunge into the Heart of God, who reveals to us the breadth and length, the height and depth of His love (cf. Eph 3:18). In fact, no one has ever understood and loved the Sacred Heart of Jesus more deeply and better than Mary. For this reason, there is no other access to the deepest mystery of the Saviour than in and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

And we will never cease to be amazed upon discovering who Jesus really is, and what the mystery of His heart is. Only when completely submerged into the Heart of Mary will Christ reveal to us His deepest secrets, which He has reserved for the little ones and the humble ones.

We must therefore avoid the danger of considering both devotions to be side by side: on the one hand, the devotion to Mary's Heart, and on the other hand, the worship of Jesus' Heart! No, the real insight is the following: Mary wholly and always, and in her and through her always, Jesus! Very clearly did St. Maximilian Kolbe perceive, live and teach this (see the prayer of consecration of the M.I. and its conferences in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

Hence, the annual resolution No. 1:

/ Be always with Mary; depend totally on her; surrender to her totally and completely as her child, slave and knight close to the Heart of Jesus:

/ Foster devotion to the Heart of Jesus with Mary (1st Fridays, Month of the Sacred Heart, Feast of the Sacred Heart, etc.);

/ Solemnly make or renew this year your total consecration to Jesus through Mary according St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (e.g. on March 25th);

/ Strive for the triumph of the Immaculate Heart that She may give Christ the King the greatest glory; proclaim and spread the universal and social kingship of the Sacred Heart of Jesus;

/ More than ever, be the knights and instruments of the Immaculate Conception to save as many lapse souls as possible and thus to lead them to the most holy Heart of Jesus (see act of consecration of the M.I.).

But we must go further still:

when both holiest Hearts have become reality for us, when we have truly become worshippers of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, we are introduced to an even deeper reality, that is, to the union of both Hearts. If we are able to acknowledge and love so unfathomable deep aspects of these two Hearts, if we perceive how both of them turn to each other in indescribable love, unite, merge, as it were, when we look at the relationship of both hearts to each other — what shall we say?

Here we stand before the absolute *summum* of LOVE: in the most holy Heart of Jesus the whole love of God for the world is revealed; in the Immaculate Heart of Mary the whole love of the creature for God is revealed! The united Hearts are the symbol of the eternal union of God and creature. The triumph of love!

And here lies the Militia Immaculatae deepest *raison d'être*, which we would like to present to the knights for loving contemplation during the year 2018. When we look at the M.I. emblem, we see the united Hearts of Jesus and Mary and the M.I. in the midst of these Hearts!

Hence the annual resolution No. 2:

/ Through Mary to Jesus, but also with Jesus to Mary! This flow from one to the other, this mutual fertilization, is depicted very deeply and beautifully in Father Emil Neubert's book "My Supreme Ideal, Jesus — the Son of Mary". This year, we want to take this booklet in hand and look at it again and again;

/ Be aware that the greatest and most important thing, as a knight, to be allowed to bring to mankind is depicted here: be happy to wear the badge of the M.I. and appreciate its banner and gather around it in the apostolate of the M.I.

/ As much as possible fast once a month, in honour of the united Hearts of Jesus and Mary, because fasting is a great source of many graces for us and the souls entrusted to us. The 1st Friday could be the worldwide fast day of M.I. (on a voluntary basis).

/ Constantly strive at "keeping yourself immaculate from this world" (James 1:27). The prayer that expresses the love for Jesus and Mary and also for souls is especially recommended: "Jesus, Mary, I love you - save souls!"

And so, in 2018, not only will we not forget the treasures of the message of Fatima and the M.I., but we will also look deeper and more earnestly put it into practice, because all this was given to us only to give God the greatest glory and to lay as many souls as possible at the feet of Jesus' Heart through the Immaculata!

Fr. Karl Stehlin

Singapore, on the 30th of December 2017