

**Laudatory speech for the awarding
of the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Honorary Prize**

to Dr. Ursula Fox

**November 13, 2025
Center for Dialogue and Prayer, Oświęcim**

Dear Ursula Fox,
distinguished guests,

Today, the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation and the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation are presenting the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Honorary Award.

This year, we were faced with the task of finding a personality to receive the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Award once again

The board considered a number of highly deserving individuals who were eligible for the award. We realized that one prize was not enough to honor all the deserving people who would have been worthy of this award.

Finally, we decided to award the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Honorary Prize in addition to the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Prize this year.

For this honorary award, it was important to us to select a person who, on the one hand, had rendered outstanding services to the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation, which was founded in 1973. At the same time, this person should represent the transition from the foundation to the foundation, i.e., the expanded international perspective that is inherent in the nature and work of the foundation.

We chose Dr. Ursula Fox.

Dr. Fox and her husband, Ulrich Fox, who passed away in 2012, have been closely associated with the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation for decades—since the 1970s, initially as donors and, from the mid-1990s, as volunteers.

Ursula Fox and Ulrich Fox were involved in all areas of the foundation's work, including recreational and social stays, remembrance projects, visits to the sick, accompanying spa treatments and aid projects in the successor states of the former Soviet Union, and organizing eyewitness projects. In addition, they accompanied survivors from Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine on recreational trips to northeastern Poland.

Ulrich Fox left the Kolbe Foundation a collection of valuable short biographical portraits of survivors, whom he had photographed and interviewed about their fates during projects in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

To this day, Ursula and Ulrich Fox are highly esteemed and revered by those they worked with. Both were exceptionally committed to helping people who suffered under Nazi rule. Whenever they met those affected, they tried to do so on an equal footing. In addition, their commitment was supported by their deep faith.

One of their particular achievements is that they helped to give the former victims back their names and give them a face.

Ursula Fox was a member of the volunteer spokesperson team for many years and, within this circle, provided important impetus for the design and further development of the work of the MKW. From the spokesperson team, she was appointed by the board to the general meeting of the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation. Here, she contributed her objective and critical perspective to discussion and development processes.

Finally, Ursula Fox played a decisive role as co-author of the book “Helfen, Begegnen, Erinnern. Engagement für KZ-Überlebende. Die Einsatzpraxis der Ehrenamtlichen im Maximilian-Kolbe-Werk” (Helping, Encountering, Remembering: Commitment to Concentration Camp Survivors. The Practical Work of Volunteers at the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation), which was published in the anniversary year 2023.

It was Ursula Fox who, at the 2015 general meeting, called for the establishment of a working group to promote the merger of the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation and the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation.

The following year (2016), this working group began its work under the leadership of Stefan Vesper. Ursula Fox was, of course, appointed to this committee, where she made a decisive contribution to the discussions.

Following the preliminary work of the working group, the executive boards took over the further discussions on the merger of the two organizations in 2018. From this point on, Willy Brandt's statement could be applied to this process: “Now what belongs together is growing together.” (W. Brandt, November 10, 1989)

At that time, Ursula Fox had already been a member of the board of trustees of the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation for several years. Sent by the Kolbe Foundation to this committee of its sister organization, she also represented the goal of merging the foundation and the organization here. Ursula Fox and Ulrich Fox have made a valuable contribution to understanding and reconciliation between Germans and the victims of National Socialism in Poland and other countries in Central Eastern Europe. Through their work, they have become role models of Christian charity, living and acting in the spirit of God.

Dear Ursula Fox,

Since we have known each other, we have repeatedly exchanged views on the work of the Kolbe Foundation and the merging of the foundation and the organization.

This discourse has always been about our common cause, even if we have sometimes had heated discussions.

Your expertise, your wisdom, and your objective and critical approach have helped us to keep our focus on what is essential, or to refocus on it.

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Today, you will receive the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation Honorary Award in person. The co-recipient of this award is your dear husband, Ulrich Fox, posthumously.

In addition, you may accept this award on behalf of all those who, to this day, are committed to helping the survivors of concentration camps and ghettos as donors and volunteers at the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation.