THE APPEALS OF OUR LADY

APPARITIONS AND MARIAN SHRINES IN THE WORLD

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary at FOSTORIA

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1956-1959

Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred Neuzil), of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood and subsequently a contemplative of the Indwelling Trinity, witnessed on several occasions apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary as "Our Lady of America" as well as of Our Lord, Saint Joseph, Saint Gabriel, and Saint Michael. She said that the Blessed Virgin asked her to paint a picture of the vision of Our Lady of America and to have a statue carved to be placed, at the conclusion of a solemn procession, in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. The Virgin Mary appeared several times with a white veil that reached almost to her waist and with a mantle and a dress of purest white, without decorations. A clasp held together the ends of the mantle, at the top. It was completely golden, as was the tall and brilliant crown that she was wearing. Her hair and eyes seemed light chestnut, as Sister Mary Ephrem remembers. She was barefoot but her feet were not always visible, at times they were covered by the movements of the cloud on which she was standing. She smiled often and revealed a heart surrounded by roses that sent out tongues of fire. Our Lady promised that miracles even greater than those of Lourdes and Fatima would occur here, right in America, in particular in the United States, if we would have done as she desired. Sister Mary Ephrem said that Our Lady called herself Our Lady of America in response to the love of all her children of America so devoted to her. No formal approval has been granted to the authenticity of the apparition of Our Lady of America. The Auxiliary Bishop of Cincinnati, Monsignor Paul F. Leibold, formally approved the distribution of the presumed messages and the project of the "Medal of Our Lady of America". He personally paid for the production of the first medals ordered. Moreover, before dying, Monsignor Leibold received two large plaques depicting Our Lady of America and one was hung in the Catholic Chancery of Cincinnati. The Bishop also approved the printing of private messages of the revelation of Sister Mary Ephrem, to whom he was the spiritual director for many years. The contents of the private revelation received by Sister Mary Ephrem were published with the *Imprimatur* of Archbishop Leibold. A specific request of Our Lady of America was that her statue had to be placed in the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception. A statue of Our Lady of America was carried in procession inside the Basilica on several occasions, on the part of the *Apostolatus Unitè* and other groups. On May 31, 2006, a statue of Our Lady of America was installed in the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament and in the Monastery of the Angels in Hanceville, Alabama. In one of the messages the Virgin Mary is pleased with Sister Mildred for the love with which many of her children of America honor her:

"I am pleased, my daughter, of the love and the honor that my children in America give me, especially through the glorious and exclusive privilege of the Immaculate Conception. I promise to reward their love by interceding through the power of the Heart of my Son, with the miracles of grace of my Immaculate Heart. I do not promise miracles of the body but of the soul (Diary, p. 10)". On the feast of the Martyrs, Our Lady manifests herself clearly and announces in more detail the mission that she has entrusted us:

"I am Our Lady of America. I desire that my children give me honor, especially through the purity of their lives ... My daughter I entrust to you this message that you must spread to my children in America. I desire that it be the country dedicated to my purity. The miracles that I will perform will be the miracles of the soul. They must have faith and believe firmly in my love for them. I desire that they be the children of my Pure Heart. I desire to promote among the peoples and the nations, through my children of America, the cause of faith and purity. Let them come to me with trust and simplicity and I, their Mother, will teach them to become pure ... and their own hearts will be well received by the Heart of my Son (Diary, p. 10-11)". Our Lady presented herself to Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil as "Our Lady of America, Immaculate Virgin". And again, in a subsequent vision, she said "I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling created by He Who dwells in me". Sister Mildred asserted that the Virgin had made her understand that abortion was provoking the punishment of God on America and on the whole world. It is the sin against the dignity of the human person created in the image of God, the most serious and deplorable violation of human rights because the greatest innocence and vulnerability of the victim deserved the care and absolute protection of his parents and of society. The sin against life itself, at its beginning, committed in the cruelest form. When a nation kills its children in the womb, it also destroys itself: "My beloved daughter, what I am about to tell you concerns, in a particular way, my children in America. Unless they repent through humiliation and abstinence and they change their lives, God will strike them with punishments still unknown to them ... What I ask, I asked and I will continue to ask is the change of their life. Sanctification must come from within (Diary, p. 21)". "My dear daughter, adored by my Son and loved by me, my message has not been heeded and I have found no one to plead the cause of change from within. The presence of the Trinity in every human being is a fundamental point, the basis of internal holiness. From here will flow a life of profound devotion and the love for penance, as the discipline to convert all the nations and prepare them seriously to the coming of my Son and His Kingdom... Dear Daughter, some among my children are faithful, some are priests and religious who lead a life of prayer and devotion to the service of my Son. What consolation they are for me, with what joy I observe them promoting the Kingdom. But there must be more devoted souls, more, many more. Until this will occur, there will not be peace and many other sufferings will affect the world. I desire to spare all this to my children but I cannot do it without their help. You must try to make them understand that the life of God within them is the source of their peace and happiness. There is no other way. It is this that my Son has come to teach and bring and it is for this that He lived and died. If the mystery of the presence of God within us is not accepted and lived, peace will not be able to exist. It is the only way; believe me my daughter (Diary, p. 37)". On November 22, 1980, Our Lady spoke to Sister Mildred of an heavenly mission assigned to our modest nation, the United States, with these words: "Beloved daughter, the United States is a small nation among many, but has it not perhaps been said that 'a child shall lead them'? It is the United States that will guide the world towards peace, the peace of Christ, the peace that He has brought with Himself from Heaven becoming man in the little town of Bethlehem. The Savior did not come into this world in a large city but in a small one, yet another time one among many. Dear daughter, if the United States will not accept and bring faithfully to completion the mission entrusted by Heaven to lead the world towards peace, there will come upon them and upon all the nations a great turmoil of wars and incredible sufferings. However, if the United States will respect the mission entrusted by Heaven but will nevertheless fail in pursuing peace because the rest of the world will not listen to them or will not want to cooperate, then the United States will not be punished (Diary, p. 38)". I feared that the burden of leadership would have been too great for the United States without special help from Heaven. Our Lady assured me that Michael and the entire army of Saints would offer their assistance in any moment. As Queen of Angels, she commanded them with love and they accomplished her will. This reassured me and the fears that gripped me left me.

"Dear Daughter, the devil is so insidious that at times he pretends to be good. Only the simplest and purest of hearts can note the difference. Many works and good people are ruined and destroyed by apparently good people manipulated by the powers of the devil because they do not possess the ability to distinguish an insincere heart from a truthful one (Diary, p. 40)" The following words of Our Lord to Sister Mildred pronounced on July 13, 1981 teach us to find protection from the snares of evil, to find true wisdom, only in Him: "Many unnatural actions are accomplished in the name of love. This evil masks itself and is tolerated like an intrinsic right like the other ones. Even some of my priests and consecrated virgins have remained trapped in this evil net, without being aware of the terrible consequences. My beloved one, many false doctrines are taught and for many the true Christ has never come to us. The false prophets and the self-proclaimed messiahs are sending many people away from me, from the right path, from truth and from life. I am the true Messiah Who has been sent". Also Saint Joseph appeared to Sister Mildred reaffirming his special protective role towards the Church:

"I am the protector of the Church and of the home, as I was the protector of Christ and of his Mother while I was living on earth. Jesus and Mary desire that my pure heart, for a time hidden and unknown, now be honored in a special way. Let my children honor my most pure heart in a special way on the first Wednesday of the month by reciting the joyful mysteries of the rosary in remembrance of my life with Jesus and Mary and of the love that I had for them and of the pain that I suffered with them. Let them receive Holy Communion in union with the love by which I received the Savior for the first time and all the times I held Him in my arms (Diary, p. 34)"

In the apparitions of 1958 to Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, Saint Joseph himself says: "I bring to the souls the purity of my life and the obedience that have crowned it ... My spiritual paternity extends to all the children of God and, together with my Virgin Spouse, I watch over them with immense love and diligence. May the fathers come to me, the humble one, so that they may learn obedience with respect to authority: of the church, always, as voice of God; of the laws of the country where they live, as long as they are not contrary to God and to their fellow people. My obedience to the divine will has been perfect, like it had been shown to me and taught by the law and by the Hebrew religion. Negligence is not pleasing God and it shall be severely punished in the other world. The Most Holy Trinity thus desires that I be honored because in my unique paternity all the paternities may be blessed ... By honoring my paternity in a special way, you also honor Jesus and Mary. The Most Holy Trinity has placed in our hands the peace of the world ... I desire that the souls come to me so that they may learn the true union with the divine will".

On November 8, 1954 Our Lady spoke intimately to the Sister with the following exhortation and promise, beautiful but challenging:

"It is the desire of the Son that fathers and mothers are committed to imitating me and my chaste spouse in our blessed life in Nazareth. We practiced the simple virtues of family life; Jesus, our Son, was at the center of all our love and our activities. The Most Blessed Trinity dwelt within us in such a way to greatly surpass what can be imagined. For us it was the paradise on earth where, yet another time, God was walking among the people. Since in our little house no sin was committed, the heart of my Son and my immaculate heart desire that sin, as much as possible, be unknown in the homes of our children. The Most Holy Trinity shall dwell in you only if you will be faithful to the virtues of our life in Nazareth. Then, you too, my children, will aspire to another paradise. God will walk among you and you will experience the peace". If Jesus believed important to announce these warnings by speaking to Sister Mildred already at the beginning of the 1940s, it means that He considered necessary to face the problem of the growing decline of the spiritual dimension and the role of the family in the society and inside the Church. "Unfortunate shall be the parents who give a bad example to their children! Terrible shall be their judgment! I will ask a rigorous account of all the souls entrusted to their care. Woe to the parents who teach their children how to earn materially in this world and forget to prepare them for the one to come! Woe to the children who disobey and do not respect their parents! "Honor your father and mother". On this they shall be judged with greater severity". Then Jesus pronounces the blessings for those who try to make their family similar to the Holy Family, a place where God is at home with us: "Blessed be the homes that honor My name and the name of my Father. Blessed be the homes where I am loved, where the Most Holy Trinity dwells. Blessed be the parents and the children who have made their hearts the dwelling of God".

On the vigil of February 11, 1958, Our Lady pronounced these strong words to Sister Mildred regarding the only true path towards holiness, for ourselves and for the members of our families. "Beloved daughter, you are surprised by the sword and the deep wound that it has created in my heart. It is the sword of the sorrow inflicted by my children who do not allow me to show them the right way. There is only one way to the Father, my daughter, a single road towards the eternal union. It is the way of divine humanity. It is through my Son, only begotten Son of the Father, that the soul attains the perfect union with the Divinity, as perfect as human nature is capable of it, with the help of divine grace. But my children will not listen; they will not listen. They will follow other roads but not this one (Diary, p. 23)". Our Lady communicated this reality to Sister Mildred with these words:

"The Most Blessed Trinity dwells within us like we can't even imagine. For us it was the earthly paradise where, yet another time, God was walking among the people. The Most Holy Trinity will dwell in you only if you will faithfully respect the virtues of our life in Nazareth. Then, you too, my children, will aspire to another paradise and God will walk among you and peace will reign (Diary, p. 8)". In November of 1957, Our Lady manifested herself to Sister Mildred as the "Immaculate Tabernacle of the divine indwelling" saying "all the glory of the Daughter of the King is interior". She defined herself "Our Lady of the divine indwelling, created by He Who dwells in us". Sister Mildred describes her apparition as "suffused in a soft light that appeared to come from inside her. It seemed to spread and saturate all her person, even her dress and the roses".

True sanctity comes from within. It is this divine presence in our souls that sanctifies us. It is the action of grace of God, not our own, that makes us holy and transports us to the presence of his Kingdom of glory. Holiness is strictly linked to the abandonment of our will to the one of God and of our means to His. This message of Our Lady underlines this fact still another time: it underlines the supremacy of prayer with respect to our activity. God is always the first love, He who gives and the gift Himself. Through His action in our souls, we too shall be infused and filled of the glory of God. This is the reason for which we have been created and it is this that we were asked to know. "I am the Mother of sacred humanity and it is my special task in the role of co-redemptrix of the human race, to help souls to reach the holiness of the Father in the eternal union, showing them how to receive Christ, to absorb His Spirit and to become one with Him (Diary, p. 24)".

In 1956, Saint Joseph spoke to Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil: "In the union with my Holy Spouse I have become co-redeemer of the human race. Through the compassion for the sufferings of Jesus and Mary I have cooperated, like no one else, for the salvation of the world (Diary, p. 13)". The Holy Family reflects more faithfully the interior life of the Most Holy Trinity and becomes the earthly trinity and model of all the families on earth. In 1954 Mary said: "The Most Holy Trinity dwells within us as we can't even imagine. For us it was the earthly paradise where, yet another time, God was walking among the people (Diary, p. 8)".

His Eminence Cardinal Raymond L. Burke publicized a letter in 2007 in which he explained the reasons for his positive opinion regarding the apparitions of Our Lady of America.

Image illustrating the apparition

The Chapel of the Mother of Mercy in Rome City where Our Lady of America appeared the first time (about 1950)

Medal of Our Lady of America. Monsignor Leibold fulfilled the first of the requests of Our Lady of America, pressured through Sister Ephrem, and engraved on a medal the Image of Our Lady of America, on one side, and a coat of arms on the other side. The coat of arms represents symbolically the substance of private revelation received by Sister Mary Ephrem, particularly the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in Christian heroes that is source of life and family unity. The coat of arms reflects the pantry and the abundance of the love of the family, through the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity, whose model is the Mother of God, with her title of Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States of America

Statue of Our Lady of America

The Immaculate Virgin, Our Lady of America, appeared to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil on November 22 and 23, 1957, with her magnificent image that unites Mary of Genesis to Mary of Revelation and she identified herself in this way: "I am the Lady of the divine indwelling, created by He Who lives in us". Our Lady was standing on a sphere, with her right foot placed on a quarter of crescent moon and her left foot on the usual of a rather small but very ugly dragon. I saw the fire coming out of its enormous jaws but not much, as if it could not open them completely due to the feet of Our Lady. At times it seemed to be black, sometimes of a shade of green. Our Lady was entirely dressed in white. Her veil was so long that it seemed to envelop half of the sphere. At times the veil appeared so transparent that the hair of Our Lady was glimpsed, luminous like many brilliant stars. At times the ends of the veil, the sleeves and the ornaments were outlined by the light. The veil was pinned to her head on a crown of white roses. Her feet were bare

During her second visit the Virgin Mary slowly raised her hands which she then crossed on her chest. As she was making this gesture, she slightly bowed her head forward and it seemed that her eyes were not purely but completely closed. On her chest, although through the veil, one could see the Triangle and the eye, often represented as the symbol of the divine indwelling. The feet of Our Lady were bare, but on each of them there was a large white rose of such a bright white, that the softness of the petals could be barely distinguished. It appeared that a powerful ray of light gushed from the divine presence in Our Lady on the sphere and on her feet. Then, next to the figure of Our Lady, on her head, appeared a parchment scroll on which were written the following words in gold: "All the glory of the Daughter of the King is inside each one of us"

Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C.

The ostensory of the apparitions of Our Lady of America, Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred Neuzil)

The brain tumor of the boy Jesus Maria is completely healed after using the spring that gushed from the place of the apparitions in Rome City

The statue of Our Lady of Jesus has been carried on pilgrimage to numerous places, including Ground Zero in New York

In the place where Our Lady of Fátima appeared (Spain, van Springs), the well that was without water suddenly began to fill itself with water on Good Friday of 1976. Since then there have been many miracles of healing attributed to using the water of the well

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