

## Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God *Handmaid of Him Who Dwells Within*



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In the evening of August 5<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Our Lady of the Snow, as I knelt in my room, Our Lady spoke to me about the Divine Indwelling. It was her life and she lived it perfectly, always conscious of His presence, never forgetting that all her greatness came from within, from Him Who dwelt there, working, loving, and doing good through her. This is what Our Lady means when she speaks of reformation, renewal. It is this about which she is so concerned, namely, sanctification from within.

As Our Lady spoke this, she seemed at the time to be deeply occupied. Though the serenity of her countenance never left her, she spoke with a gravity that made her words all the more solemn. She seemed anxious to impress me with some idea of the greatness of this gift of God to us, namely, His Divine Presence within our souls through sanctifying grace.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, Ohio, Page 18. August 5, 1957.)

Sister Mildred described Our Lady's anxious concern that we understand the greatness of God's gift of His Divine Presence, the Divine Indwelling, within our souls through sanctifying grace. To begin to understand the greatness of this gift, we need to understand how God prepared humanity for His Indwelling Presence throughout the history of our forefathers in the Faith, the Chosen People of Israel. Adam and Eve had enjoyed special gifts that allowed them to walk with God in the Garden of Eden and enjoy a fullness of grace and intimacy with God beyond their nature. When they sinned, the consequences of their sin afflicted all their posterity, all of us. Darkness fell upon the land and over humanity. The hardness of sin and its self centeredness overtook the human heart. A stubborn and rebellious spirit invaded the human will, both collectively as a people and individually as persons. The mind was puffed with pride as Satan seduced it with his tricky lies in opposition

to the simple Truth of God. **Pride and disobedience are the root of all sin and only great humility and total obedience to the will of God can reverse their power over us and not only restore the original order of grace but far exceed it.** Adam and Eve were promised a Messiah as they were driven from Paradise -- a woman whose offspring would crush the proud head of Satan's pride and crush his power over the created world and the people in it. **Oh how Satan hates this woman and her offspring and rages in endless battle against them!** God said: **"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."** (Douay-Rheims Bible, Gen 3:15)

So began the covenant God made with humanity. To make that covenant more concrete, God chose a special people to give testimony to the world of His care for those who turn to Him for their life and sustenance. He would be Abba to them. When God led His people from slavery in Egypt, He instructed them to build a portable dwelling place for Him, a tabernacle, a tent of meeting which would travel with them as a sign of His enduring covenant as He led them to the Promised Land. **"My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people."** (Ezekiel 37:27) The tabernacle would have three parts: the outer area where animals were slaughtered for the sacrificial offerings in worship of God and for the atonement of sin; the inner chamber or Holy Place with its seven-branched oil lamp stand or Menorah, the table with 12 loaves of showbread, and an altar of incense; and the inmost chamber or sanctuary, the Most Holy Place or Holy of Holies which housed the Ark of the Covenant containing the sacred signs of God's providence and Presence with His people—manna, the tablets of the Ten Commandments, and the rod of Aaron of the priestly tribe of Levi. The Ark was made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold as befits the All Holy One, King of the Universe. So holy was that inner sanctuary that only the high priest could enter it, and that but once a year to offer incense and praise to the Almighty and to plead for mercy and the forgiveness of sin for the people. As the incense rose to heaven, the Shekinah, the glory of God's Presence filled the sanctuary. God would then speak to the people through the priest from above His mercy seat, the solid gold lid of the Ark that was graced with two carved cherubim facing each other and turned toward the mercy seat. God was preparing His people for a new Tabernacle and a new Ark, not made of wood and gold but made of human flesh by the power of His Holy Spirit, a sanctuary no one but the Eternal High Priest could enter, the virginal womb of Mary. She would bear, not merely signs of God's Presence but the Holy One, the Son of God Himself, Whose birth would be announced with the Star of David, for this royal one would be the Light of the world, the Lamp of the Eternal City where there will be no night but only day, where He will reign forever as Lord of lords and King of kings.

In the fullness of time the archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary in the small town of Nazareth, to announce this Birth by which all time would be measured. It would fulfill the ancient promise of a Savior for the world and mark the beginning of mankind's redemption.

**"Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of David his**

**father; and he shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy One which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”**  
**(Luke 1:26-38)**

The archangel also told Mary that her cousin Elizabeth, well beyond child bearing age, had already conceived a child and was in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible to God. Scripture says Mary hastened to see the wondrous deed God had wrought in Elizabeth. Here merge the great mysteries of the Incarnation of God and His Divine Indwelling in the human person. In the Annunciation we celebrate the Spirit's overshadowing of the Virgin Mary by which the Holy One of God was conceived and took flesh in her womb, making it a living tabernacle in flesh for the Son of God who literally dwelt within her for nine whole months. She would bear Him into our world and give God a Body by which He could be seen and touched and heard in accord with man's nature. When the Council of Ephesus declared Mary *Theotokos, God-bearer*, in 431, it likewise recognized her as the Ark of the New Covenant by that very fact. Our definitions of the dogmas of the Immaculate Conception, the Perpetual Virginity of Mary and of her Divine Motherhood and the revelation of the Divine Indwelling and the Incarnation of God in the Sacred Humanity of Jesus unfold from these passages on the Annunciation and the Visitation of Mary. Elizabeth becomes the first "theologian" to proclaim the divinity of Christ in the womb of Mary and to proclaim her the mother of God. God's New Covenant, not merely for one people but for all people, is made manifest in two humble women who are totally obedient to God and who totally believe in and trust in His Word. The title, Ark of the Covenant, would become part of the Litany of Loretto which we say so often to honor Mary as *Theotokos, God-bearer*.

**When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled." (Luke 1:41-46)**

Then Mary sang her beautiful Magnificat acknowledging her humility as the handmaid of the Lord, praising the marvelous things God had done for her. **"I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within."**® **"All the King's glory lies within."** She would bear in her womb not merely the rod of a priest but the Eternal High Priest Himself who would offer the sacrifice to end all sacrifices, the Perfect Sacrifice of His own Self as God and man, a sacrifice that would not merely signify the forgiveness of sin but would actually forgive all sin and reconcile mankind to God. She would bear in her womb, not manna to feed the body, but the very Bread of Life come down from heaven to be spiritual food for the eternal salvation of our souls. She would bear, not merely the tablets of stone that outline a rule of life for God's people, but the New Moses Who would Himself be our Law of Life, Who would fulfill the Old Law and establish a New Covenant built on a Law of Love, the two Great Commandments of the love of God above all things and the love of neighbor as oneself, and on the way of love outlined in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and the Beatitudes. **How blessed is this woman chosen to be the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling**

**God, the New Ark of His New Covenant of Love** which not only restores man to grace and communion with God but brings God into our flesh and into our world, so God might be one with us in Jesus Who desires to live and act through us in completing the work of redemption until time is no more. So dearly would Mary share in this work of redemption with her divine Son, in cooperation with her divine Spouse, that the Father would concede to her the mediation of the merits which Christ had won for us. As Christ is our Mediator before the throne of heaven, she would be the Mediatrix of His grace and would intercede with Him on our behalf. Surely we must sing with Mary: **“My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He Who is mighty has done great things for me.”** Does He not wish to dwell in us with His glory in some measure like He did in Mary? Her body was His temple, His tabernacle, and her womb was His Ark of dwelling, His sanctuary, His Holy of Holies on earth.

Is it any wonder, then, that Sister Mildred records in her Diary, November 22-23, 1957, this vision of Our Lady as she really and truly was, **The Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God.** We cite the whole passage here because it is **so important** to our understanding of **the Divine Indwelling** and what it means for our personal lives and what Our Lady wants us to understand about God living in and working through us to accomplish His will and His wonders of grace in the souls of men and women everywhere--**holiness from within.**



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Our dear Mother showed herself to me in a special way around 11:30 on the morning of November 22. The next day, a Saturday, the experience was more detailed as more was shown me, or perhaps I had not noticed details the day before. This vision of herself is very important, as it reveals Our Lady as she really and truly was, the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God.® [our emphasis]

Our Lady was standing on a globe, her right foot resting on a crescent or quarter moon, the left on the snout of a rather small and very ugly looking dragon. I saw fire come out of his huge jaws, but not very much, as he could not open them wide enough because of Our Lady's foot. At times he seemed to be somewhat black, again of a shade of green. Our Lady was all in white. Her veil was so long that it seemed to envelop the globe halfway. Sometimes the veil appeared so transparent that Our Lady's hair could be seen through it, and the hair seemed to be sparkling with the light of many glittering stars. At times the edges of the veil, sleeves, and garments seemed to be outlined in light. The veil was held about her head by a wreath of white roses. Her feet were bare.

The previous day Our Lady had appeared with her hands outstretched. At this second visit she slowly raised them, then crossed them on her breast rather close to her waist. While doing so, she bent her head slightly forward, and it seemed that her eyes were closed, not just lowered. On her breast, as though through a veil, the Triangle and the Eye, which is often depicted as the symbol of the Divine Indwelling, could be visibly seen. I said that Our Lady's feet were bare, that is, devoid of any kind of footwear, but on each foot was a large white rose. The roses, both on the feet and on the crown, were of such dazzling whiteness that the outlines of the petals could barely be seen, sometimes not at all. It seemed that a strong beam of light streamed from the Divine Presence within Our Lady onto the globe at her feet. Then halfway around the figure of Our Lady above her head appeared a scroll on which were written in letters of gold the words: "All the glory of the King's daughter is within." [our emphasis]

Though it did not appear that her lips moved, yet I heard these words quite plainly: "I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within."® She seemed suffused in a soft glow of light that appeared to come from within her. It seemed to permeate and, as it were, saturate her whole being, even her apparel and the roses. (Diary, Page 23.)

She seemed anxious to impress me with some idea of the greatness of this gift of God to us, namely, His Divine Presence within our souls through sanctifying grace.

**"I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within."**

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