

Martyrs of Blood and Martyrs of Love

A martyr must die for the faith, not for his property, nor his good name, nor for the sake of the party. Self-made martyrs are numerous, but they have no place in the ranks of those who are promised the Kingdom of Heaven for taking the Cross of Christ on their shoulders. (Fulton J. Sheen, *SIMPLE TRUTHS Thinking Life Through*, Liguori Publications, Liguori, MO, 1998, Pg. 16.) 89, 133.)

The post-Vatican II Roman calendar moved the feast of the North American Martyrs, the feast of St. Isaac Jogues and Companions, to October 19. Recall that it was on their pre-Vatican II feast, September 26, 1956, that Our Lady first appeared to Sister Mildred Neuzil as Our Lady of America. These six Jesuit priests and two lay brothers had great love for Our Lady and greater love for Jesus. Our land was christened with their blood and that of other martyrs who gave their lives for their faith in Jesus and for the salvation of souls. Their blood stained our soil and became the seed for the Catholic Faith in America, giving us our true Christian heritage. Only three of the eight were martyred on the soil of the United States; the others were martyred in Canada, rooting that nation in the Catholic Faith as well. The National Shrine of the North American Martyrs is located in Auriesville, New York where these three were martyred: St. Rene Goupil (September 29, 1642); St. Isaac Jogues (October 18, 1646); and St. John de Lalande (October 19, 1646). It is also the birthplace of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, our first native American saint. While hers was not a martyrdom by blood, she certainly suffered a great deal for her Faith and for the love of Jesus. Hers was a martyrdom of love and service to the poor in her village.

These martyrs faced the suspicions of a world that did not know the love of Christ for them and the desire of God to lift them up to His own divine nature, a supernatural life of grace and a share in His own divine life. A darkened intellect and a hardened will as the result of the sin of the angels and the sin of Adam, along with that free will God has given to mankind and will not take back, make war, hate, greed and poverty, diseases of the body and of the soul—in other words, war—inevitable. A life of Faith will always bring us to war with the ways of the world that are so diametrically opposed to God and His Will.

Most people assume that there is only one way to prevent wars, and that it is by a horizontal action of one group or another group, in the manner of two billiard balls, one force resisting another. But, actually, besides horizontal there is vertical action. Vertical action implies one part of the world contacting God, in order that He might influence another part of the world who resists Him. Instead of human-human contact as in war, there is the human-divine-human contact in prayer. As the heat of the sun's ray is intensified by passing through a magnifying glass, so the power of man is magnified by passing through Divinity! (Sheen, Pg. 89.)

The past months, and October in particular, have seen prayer campaigns all across America, making that human-divine-human vertical contact, pleading with God for peace in



Shrine of North American Martyrs—statue of Our Lady of America in lower right corner

our world and for healing of the vicious divisions in our government, doctrinal divisions in our Church, divisions in our homes and division within ourselves. We are in a spiritual battle never before so wicked, as satan seems to be acting as if he is on his last battlefield to destroy the Church and so many souls with it.

At Fatima Our Lady gave us a peace plan to use the weapon of the rosary against the forces of evil. St. Lucia assured us that there is no problem on earth that cannot be solved with the power of the rosary. Prayer, penance and sacrifice! Our Lady of America repeats the same call to repentance and conversion, reform of life and spiritual renewal, especially of the family. The weapons in this message are Faith, the family rosary, the Eucharist and the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity, the doctrine of living in the state of grace. In 1954 Our Lord told Sister Mildred that what was lacking in the world was Faith, for many profess it but do not live it. How cold those hearts are, for without Faith there can be no love. In 1957, Our Lady told Sister:

“There will be peace, as has been promised, but not until my children are purified and cleansed from defilement, and clothed thus with the white garment of grace, are made ready to receive this peace, so long promised and so long held back because of the sins of men.”

“Peace is from within, not from without. If mankind were at peace with itself, there would be peace in the world. Man will only have peace if he has in his heart that true love of neighbor that springs from a whole-hearted love for my Son.”

(Sister Mildred Neuzil, *The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA*, Tiffin, Ohio, Pg. 21, 16.)

America has a number of saints who were true martyrs of love, those who achieved great holiness through the sacrifices of ordinary life and the missions God entrusted to them in caring for the poor with an extraordinary love for Him and for them. These saints are enthroned in the



lower crypt church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, our patronal church, in Washington, D.C., in what is called the Hall of the American Saints. They are St. Katherine Drexel, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, who is also honored near Auriesville with the North American Martyrs. St. Teresa of Calcutta is a magnificent example of a martyrdom of love, serving Christ in the least of His brethren, the poorest of the poor. Bishop Fulton J. Sheen cites another beautiful example of magnanimous love of God and neighbor that may not be so familiar to us.

It is not my business to beg for the poor of the world, and I know how much thought is given to the hungry, the lame, the blind and the maimed. It is not that great feasts are to be condemned, but rather that the poor are to be remembered. It is not possible to invite the poor of Asia and Africa and Oceania to our tables, but at least we can give to them a proportion of what we spend on the rich. King St. Louis IX of France did this very thing. He had two hundred poor persons dine with him every evening, and he personally served them at table. (Sheen, Pg. 133.)

The mystic, Elizabeth of the Trinity, and Sister Mildred Neuzil are kindred souls, both becoming victim souls for the love of Jesus and for the salvation of sinners. Elizabeth stated:



**SAINT
ELIZABETH
OF THE
TRINITY**

Born: July 18, 1880
Died: November 9, 1906
Beatified: November 25, 1984
Canonized: October 16, 2016

OF SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY, Pg. 119.)

“It is the Good God who is pleased to immolate His little victim. This Mass that He is saying with me and of which His love is the priest, may last a long time yet, but the time in the hand of Him Who is sacrificing her does not seem long to the little victim. She can say that even if she walks the path of suffering, still she is on the way of happiness, that true happiness which no man can take from her.”
(Marie-Michel Philipon, O.P., THE SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE



Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil

One day we believe Sister Mildred Neuzil will stand alongside the others in the Hall of American saints. Her life of prayer, penance and sacrifice for the salvation of souls was so great that her Divine Spouse invited her to unimaginable intimacy in His bitter Passion. Her August 1956 letter to her spiritual director describes the following:

Jesus came to me holding a large cross and a crown of thorns. He said to me smiling, as though He knew what the answer would be (He did of course.) “I come with My cross and My crown of thorns, will you accept Me My spouse?” You know the only answer I could give, Father. Who could refuse Jesus anything? During the night I awoke and Jesus said to me, and He said it with a profound emphasis: “I have placed you upon the Altar of Sacrifice.” On June 14th, anniversary of my perpetual union with Jesus, He asked me again: “Bride of My Heart, do you still wish to suffer all things to give Me to souls?” I answered: “Yes, yes dear Lord, I am poor and wretched, and unworthy, but you know what is in my heart.” He said, “My little white dove, will you then continue to wear the Crown of Thorns, and permit yourself to be nailed to the Cross?” I told him in the best way I could, how much I desired Him to do with me just as He desired. So in this way my desires are wholly united to His.

In 1980, Our Lady spoke to Sister that there is no true love without sacrifice and that a selfish heart has no room for love for it is filled with self. Love brings peace!

“My precious one, if self-love be true, it contains within itself the love of all and ignores no one. Your love then becomes God-love because it embraces and contains the love of everyone. Heed this, sweet child, then you will despise no one, no matter what their conduct might be. The Heart of my Son is open to anyone who wishes to enter and is closed to none.” ... “You must try to make my people understand that the life of God within them is the source of their peace and happiness. There is no other way. This is what my Son came to teach and bring and it was for this He lived and died. Unless this mystery of God’s Presence within is accepted and lived, peace will not come. It is the only way, believe me, my daughter. (Sister Mildred Neuzil, The Diary, Pg. 43, 37, 1980-83.)

Most Holy Trinity, come live in us that we may live with a love like Yours!

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