

I Come with My Cross and My Crown of Thorns

Permit Yourself to Be Nailed to the Cross



On May 29, 1954, prior to any appearance of Our Blessed Lady, our dear Lord spoke to Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, visionary for the “Our Lady of America®” devotion, calling her “my little white dove,” an endearing term that speaks to the symbolism of the dove for humility, simplicity and purity, the dove used so often in the sacrifices of the poor and as a symbol for the gentle humble ways in which the Holy Spirit works in souls to effect sanctification from within through the Divine Indwelling. Doves were the sacrificial offerings Mary and Joseph made at the temple precisely because they were poor. The dove as the sacrificial offering of the poor and as a pure white victim is a fitting term for Sister Mildred who was such a humble soul and so poor in spirit and so pure of body and mind and heart. No wonder our Victim-Lord, Who is the Eternal High Priest and the Perfect Sacrifice to end all sacrifices, asked Sister to be a **victim-soul** like Himself when He asked her if she would be willing to suffer for souls, willing to accept **His cross** and **His crown of thorns**. This is why we believe Sister Mildred bore the interior stigmata, which many say is only revealed after death. Since Sister herself said that one day she would be beatified, not because of her but because of the importance of this devotion, we know her body will one day be exhumed and we trust this belief will be confirmed. Jesus spoke to her of His love for us:

My Heart beats with compassion for the sorrows of man. Oh, how gladly would I help him bear the weight of his terrible cross, fashioned, for the most part, by his own guilt! But alas, he will have none of My help. So I am forced to stand by the side of the road and watch him struggle hopelessly in his agony.

O man, what have I done to you that you should refuse My aid?

My little white dove, do you know what I find most lacking in the world today? It is FAITH. There are so few souls that believe in Me and My love. They profess their belief and their love, but they do not live this belief. Their hearts are cold, for without faith there can be no love. **Pray and sacrifice yourself, My child, that faith may once again find entrance into the hearts of men.**

(Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, Diary, "*Our Lady of America*©," Fostoria, Ohio, pg. 5.)

In the fall of that same year, 1954, an Angel appeared to Sister Mildred pointing again to that cross and suffering for souls. Sister records that encounter.

The Angel said to me, "Receive the palm of victory." I became suspicious. I could think of no victory of mine that deserved such a reward. Besides it sounded a bit like flattery to me. I have always been wary of words of praise; they put me on my guard. Why was the palm not given to someone else more deserving of it than I? So I shook my head and resolutely went back to my prayers.

But the Angel would not go. He spoke again, "You do not believe me. Will you accept the cross?" For me this struck more nearly home. I said, "Yes, I will accept the cross." To this he replied, "Then you will accept the palm and the sword. With the sword the saints conquered themselves, the world, and the devil. I am the Angel of Peace. I come to those whose hearts are attuned to the Voice of God. To such as these I remain a perpetual light through blinding darkness. I was sent by Him Who said, 'I am the Light of the world'." Later it was made known to me that the Angel of Peace was St. Michael. (Diary, pgs. 7-8.)

On August 16, 1956, still before the appearance of Our Lady, Sister Mildred wrote to her spiritual director, Father Paul F. Leibold as follows:

Rev. and Dear Father,

This being the eve of the First Friday I am reminded of some things that should have been mentioned before this. I was as you know, still out West in June. Well, June 8th, Feast of the Sacred Heart, we were allowed to make a night hour, those who wished to. During this time Jesus made known to me the sorrow of His Heart over the ingratitude and indifference shown to Him in the Sacrament of His Love.

When I went back to bed, 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.

When I received my last Obedience, Father, it was a bit of a let-down, as you can guess.

Sister goes on in her letter to Father Leibold regarding her Obedience, the assignment to Rome City, Indiana, which she dreaded for some reason, having been there once before. Later we learn that it was during this second assignment that she was attacked by Satan and during which she felt she was in a “ring of evil” and wanted to jump out the window and get away if she could. She did not know at the time who or what that “ring of evil” was, but it has become quite clear since Sister’s death in 2000.

She continues in her letter to Father:

Yet I tried to rise above my feelings realizing that God works all things for our good and His Glory. I am glad that Our Lord is not afraid to use me in any way that He pleases. There are times when pain blurs my vision a bit, but it is not long before His enlightening Grace makes me see again with that clear light God reserves for the lowly and pure of heart. At this time, Father, Our Lord assured me of His continued help. He said to me that evening after I had received the Obedience: **“I will be with you wherever you are, spouse of my Heart. You have nothing to fear.”** This was after I had said to Him: “Dear Lord, what are You doing to me?”

Here are some words spoken to me since. Sometimes He repeats or uses similar expressions to emphasize the special lesson He wishes to impart. Pride must be the great sin of our times, or at least one of the great ones, for Our Lord speaks so often about humility.

“My Heart speaks to the humble. It is they who hear My Voice. Be humble My children, be humble and pure of heart. Then will I come and dwell with you.”

“My little white dove, how humility and simplicity are despised by the proud of this world. Oh what a loss they suffer. For despising the humble, Christ will judge them.”

“By my humility and simplicity of Heart I glorify My Father more than all the Angels and Saints together. So it is that the humble soul glorifies God more than all the great of the world.”

[Surely it is obvious why our dear Lord called Sr. Mildred His “little white dove.” “I have placed you upon the Altar of Sacrifice!” He said.

Almost a year after Our Lady’s appearance, first as Our Lady of Lourdes where she identified herself as “I am the Immaculate Conception,” the title by which we honor her as our Patroness, and then as “Our Lady of America®”, August 1957, Our Lady tells Sister Mildred:

My poor child, you have suffered much, but do not fear. Take courage, for soon a haven of rest will be given you [the cloister which she entered in 1958]—not a refuge from suffering and pain, but a nest of solitude for the little white dove, so dear to me and the Heart of my Son. Patience, sweet child! The Will of the Father must be dearer to you than all else. This is the lesson every soul desiring intimate union with my Son must strive to learn. (Diary, pg. 19.)

Just six months later, in February of 1958, Our Lady again addresses Sister with these words on suffering:

My child, nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much. You see the sword in the Heart of your Mother. Suffering completed the work of divine grace in my soul. He who refuses to suffer will never abide in the Spirit of Christ, will never be formed into His image. ...O my small one, beloved of my Son’s Heart, prepare yourself by prayer, penance, and suffering for what is to come. (Diary, pgs. 23-24.)

Almost two years later, in December of 1959, Our Lady comes with pleading words:

O my child, tell your spiritual father that I come again to warn and to plead. Oh, penance, penance! How little my children understand it. They give me many words, but sacrifice themselves they will not. It is not me they love but themselves. Oh what blindness, sweet child, what blindness! How it pierces my heart! See, I weep, but my children show me no compassion. They behold the sword in my heart but will make no move to withdraw it. I give them love, they give me only ingratitude in return. Weep, then, dear child, weep with your Mother over the sins of men. Intercede with me before the throne of mercy, for sin is overwhelming the world and punishment is not far away. (Diary, pg. 34)

With her beloved sons and her children still not heeding her voice and embracing the reform of life Our Lady herself said she has been asking for, is asking for, and will continue to ask for, Our Lady stated that **“the Forces of Evil are enveloping the world. Their hatred, however, is now particularly focused on the United States because of the Divine Mandate given to it to lead the world to peace.”** (Diary, pg. 39,

February 11, 1981) When asked in 1982 and 1983 if there would be a nuclear war, Our Lady responded:

My faithful one, if my warnings are taken seriously and enough of my children strive constantly and faithfully to renew and reform themselves in their inward and outward lives, then there will be no nuclear war. **What happens to the world depends upon those who live in it. There must be much more good than evil prevailing in order to prevent the holocaust that is so near approaching.** Yet I tell you, my daughter, even should such a destruction happen because there were not enough souls who took my warning seriously, there will remain a remnant—untouched by the chaos who, **having been faithful in following me and spreading my warnings,** will gradually inhabit the earth again with their dedicated and holy lives. These will renew the earth in the power and light of the Holy Spirit. These faithful ones of my children will be under my protection and that of the Holy Angels, and they will partake of the life of the Divine Trinity in a most remarkable way. Let my dear children know this, precious daughter, so that they will have no excuse if they fail to heed my warnings. (Diary, pg. 45.)

While the following is private revelation and is not a matter of the public revelation of the Church that is obligatory to our Faith, it is deeply moving to read Mary of Agreda's passage describing Our Lady's compassion and union with the Passion of Jesus borne for the sake of His Church and for the salvation of souls while she was still bound to remain behind in the flesh after Jesus' Ascension into heaven.

...the blessed Mother felt in her body and purest soul all the pains and torments of our Savior Jesus, so that none of them were hidden to Her or without the corresponding suffering in her own self. All the images or impressions of the Passion remained imprinted in her interior just as She had received them; for She had made this request of her Lord. ... Hence She ordered all her occupations in such a manner, that She might at all times preserve in her heart the image of her divine Son, afflicted, outraged, wounded and disfigured by the torments of his Passion, and within Herself She beheld this image as in a most clear mirror. She heard the injuries, outrages, affronts and blasphemies against Him, with all the circumstances of time and place, and She beheld the whole Passion as in one living and penetrating vista. Throughout the day this sorrowful vision excited Her to most heroic acts of virtue and stirred her sorrow and compassion; but her most prudent love did not content itself with these exercises. During stated hours and times She engaged in other exercises with her holy angels, especially those ... bearing the tokens or the escutcheons of the instruments of the Passion. ...[see image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help - <http://www.theotokos.co.za/theotokos.jpg> showing the Infant Jesus looking bewilderedly toward the angels bearing the instruments of His future Passion.]

For each kind of the wounds and sufferings of Christ our Savior She recited special prayers and salutations in order to give them special adoration and worship. For each of the contemptuous and insulting words of the Jews and his other enemies, which had been spoken either in envy or in fury or vengeance, for each of the blasphemies uttered, She composed special hymns of veneration and honor to make up for their attempts at diminishing it. For the insulting gestures, mockeries and personal injuries, She practiced the most profound humiliations, genuflections and prostrations, and in this manner She sought continually to make up for the affronts and injuries heaped upon her divine Son in his life and his passion; and thus She confessed his Divinity, his humanity, his holiness, his miracles, his works and his doctrines. For all She gave Him glory and magnificence; and in all the holy angels joined Her, and corresponded with her full of admiration of such wisdom, fidelity and love united in a mere creature.

Even if the most blessed Mother during her whole life had engaged in no other occupation than these exercises, She would have accomplished and merited more than all the saints in all that they have done or suffered for God. By the force of love her sorrow in these exercises was equal to martyrdom many times over; and many times would she have died in them, if the divine power had not sustained her life for still greater merit and glory. ... The effects of her contemplations were often astounding; many times She wept tears of blood, which covered her whole face; at other times in her agony She was not only bathed in perspiration, but in a bloody sweat, running from Her even to the ground. What is more, sometimes her heart was wrenched from its natural position by the violence of her grief; and when She was in such extremes, her divine Son came from heaven, furnishing Her with new strength and life to soothe her sorrow and heal the wound caused by love of Him and in order that by such assistance and comfort, She might continue the exercises of her compassion.

(Sister Mary of Jesus, Mary of Agreda, THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD, Tan Books, pgs. 496-498.)

As we gaze upon the crucifix this holy Paschal season and venerate that crucifix upon which our Savior hung and died for our sins on Good Friday, let us try to imagine His long, arduous agony throughout that Passion and while hanging on that cross. **Let us try to imagine as well the sorrow and grief of His dear Mother, our dear Mother, and may we learn from her how to accept the cross and permit ourselves to be nailed to it.** With our beloved Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil who must have learned directly from Our Lady how to hunger for union with her Lord, her Divine Spouse, and who would refuse Him nothing when He came to her and presented her with His cross and His crown of thorns, may we walk in her footsteps and pick up the cross Jesus sends us and climb up on that cross to be nailed to it with Him, with Mary, with His whole Body, and allow His crown, the crown of thorns, to be ours as well, to atone for all the sin that pride, intellectual and spiritual pride, has brought into our world and into our lives. With Mary, with Sister Mildred, may we prostrate ourselves before our Savior, our Divine Spouse through Baptism, our Friend Who laid down His life so that we might live,

and let us show Him such signs of gratitude and adoration as they did, with the gift of our lives, our compassion, our repentance and our reform of life in return. Let us pray as they must have prayed to console Him in His Passion.

Acts of Love of Jesus Crucified which may be used when Kissing the Crucifix

Kiss the foot of the Cross and while doing so say in your heart:

O Jesus, in honor of and in union with that love with which Thou didst kiss, embrace, and love the Cross laid upon Thee on the day of Thy holy Passion, and, which was presented to Thee at the moment of Thy Incarnation, I love and embrace with my whole heart all the crosses, whether of body or mind, which Thou shalt be pleased to send me in the course of my life, uniting them to Thine, and imploring Thee to make me participate in the very great love with which Thou didst bear Thy own.

Kiss the Sacred Wound of Jesus' side in union with the Blessed Virgin's love of Him—or rather deeming yourself unworthy to kiss that Holy Wound, ask Our Lady in the following manner to do so for you:

O Mother of Jesus, I beg of Thee to kiss for me the Sacred Wound of the Side of Thy Son, and by that holy kiss render Him multiplied a hundredfold the love I ought to have given Him during my life. And instead of kissing the wound of the Side kiss that of His Feet, with this desire: O Jesus, I desire to kiss Thy Holy Feet with all the love Thy Blessed Mother had for Thee, offering Thee all her love in reparation for my deficiencies in that virtue.

(St. John Eudes, THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST WITHIN US.)

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