

## Jesus Clothes the Bride of His Heart with the Garments of His Passion



I Who bore the cross for love of men; how many of them bear it for love of Me? Oh My little, white dove, bride of My Heart, I crave for love. I who died that men might live am refused even a small corner in men's hearts. What have I done to deserve such ingratitude? Will men never understand the longing of My Heart for their love? Oh my little one, simple and most lovely in My sight because of the lowliness of your heart, help Me to gain for Myself the love of those for whom I suffered and died. Let My love, surrounding you and filling you, draw souls to Me in great multitudes. Such is My will, oh My beloved one. Open then your heart that I may pour into it without ceasing the sweet waters of My undying and saving Charity. For it is from this Fountain of Life, which springs forth from My Divine Heart, that men will receive Eternal Life. It was to obtain this for them that I lived, suffered, and died.

Oh, My little, white dove, sweet spouse of My Heart, I am the God of Charity, and it is through love that man will attain Me, and only through love. I have shown him the way. He has but in love, to take up his cross as I have done and follow Me. The way is sure.



(Sister Mary Ephrem Neuzil, Letter to Father Paul F. Leibold, March 3, 1957.)

The Gospel reading on Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, was Jesus' summons to anyone who wishes to be His disciple. **"Whoever wishes to come after me, must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it."** The Indian priest celebrating the Mass spoke of a parish in India that had two factions, one favoring the priest and the other refusing to accept him. After much conflict, the bishop sent a new priest to that parish. The same thing happened. A third time it happened, and the bishop finally shut down the parish for three months. Then the bishop called on a recently ordained priest *from that parish* and said he wanted to send this priest there. The young priest protested; they will "kill" me, figuratively speaking. The bishop looked at the priest and asked, "Why did you become a priest?" Then he told the young priest, **"You became a priest to die!"**

**Anyone who claims to follow Christ is called to die!** According to the **Catechism of the Catholic Church**, baptism means to be "plunged" or "immersed" into the water that symbolizes burial into Christ's death, from which one rises up by resurrection with Him as a new creation. (Page 312, #1214.) St. Paul, in Romans 6:3, asks: **"Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?"** In other words, we share in His redemptive work.

In a June 10, 1958 letter, Rev. John J. Thilges, S.V.D. wrote of his interview of Sister Mary Ephrem at the grille:

**As far as I could ascertain during the brief interview, and after some questioning, I came to the conclusion that Sister M. Ephrem is a perfect Religious of the Precious Blood, that she has a marked vocation to the contemplative life in a high degree, and that she has high mystical graces.**

**Although she admits that God has left her with some minor faults which serve to deepen her spirit of humility and obedience, her soul is adorned with the prayer of transformation. As a true bride of Jesus Christ, she longs to pray and suffer for the extension of His Kingdom on earth, and for the salvation of immortal souls. Since her gifts are definitely exceptional, I have asked Sister M. Ephrem to write her biography. (In an August 1, 1958 letter, Father Thilges states further:)**

**We may well adopt Abraham's method of bartering with our Beloved for the ransom of souls. It was for the salvation of many that He has raised your soul to intimate union with Himself. It was for their salvation that he has brought you into the safety of your cloister so that you should have nothing else to think of than their salvation. And this very cloister, with its narrow limits, now probably becomes another trial for you, and this trial is part of your vocation of living a life of pure love. Since a single act of pure love is more precious than many imperfect acts of external activity, you must congratulate yourself again and again in being the hidden captive of Christ for the salvation of souls. Hence, bathe all your sorrows and trials in His Precious Blood and trade with your talents until the Bridegroom comes. (Black our emphasis.)**

The more one reads Sister Mildred Mary (Ephrem)'s letters, the more one realizes she had two missions, one for the promotion of Our Lady's messages for the renewal of the family and of souls, and the other, to be herself a victim soul, united with Christ's Passion for the salvation of souls. In an undated letter to her spiritual director, Sister Mary Ephrem describes a second attack from Satan.

**One evening, I believe it was the same day the "ordeal" ended, as I made preparations for the night, I felt his presence in my cell. I got into bed and just as I closed my eyes the "attack" began, just that suddenly. It was no dream as I was not yet asleep. It was as though two huge, horrible arms encircled themselves around me and like a monstrous vise kept tightening and tightening. I could help myself in no way except for prayer. So, I cried out "Jesus!" The vise became tighter. I cried out in terror, "Jesus, Mary!" But this time the pressure, the pain became so unbearable, I was gasping for breath, but I managed to cry out one last prayer—"Jesus, Mary, Joseph!" Then just as suddenly as it started it stopped. I opened my eyes and my soul was filled with that deep sense of peace that has since never left me. I opened my eyes to darkness but it held no terror for me as the Phantom of Evil had fled. *Our Lord has since told me that one special part of my "mission" was to make reparation for sins against the chaste virtue. He said that to do this I would have to suffer these "attacks" off and on, all through my life. He asked if I were willing. I shuddered, Father, but how could I refuse Him? He is so good, besides His grace would always be there to help me. But it is a cause of much suffering to me and mental distress. I never know when these "attacks" will come, so can do nothing but pray. These latter attacks usually last only a few moments or minutes, sometimes longer, but they always seem to last such a long time and I am always in dread of them.* (Black our emphasis.)**

We are familiar with the Scripture passage about putting on the armor of Christ to do battle with Satan, but what does it mean to put on the garments of Jesus' Passion? What were they? The crown of thorns! His disfigured Holy Face! The deep groove in His

shoulder from the weight of His cross! The nail wounds in His hands and feet! The gash in His side from the thrust of the lance! The flesh that hung from His Sacred Body where metal tipped whips tore at bleeding flesh! The spittle and curses that fell upon His all holy, most pure and divine Self! A sip from His chalice of bitterness! The nakedness of abandonment! Although we have shared this passage from Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem's) August 6, 1956 letter before, it gives us some idea of how deeply she was



configured to Christ's Passion and how He clothed her with His garments of torture and filth--the sins of all mankind--in order to wash them clean in His Most Precious Blood. What a perfect meditation for Lent! If Jesus were to ask us to wear His crown of thorns and to be nailed to His cross, would we say "yes?" No matter what He would ask of us?

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, 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.

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!"**

In a June 5, 1957 letter to Father Leibold, Sister recounts Jesus' words to His "little white dove."

**"My little, white dove, the evil spirits have been let loose upon the earth because love has grown cold in the hearts of men. Only sacrificial souls will be able to cast them forth into the infernal abyss from which they have come forth.**

**Bride of My Heart, let love be the sacrificial altar of your holocaust. Behold the Furnace of Love, the Heart of your Divine Spouse. Lead to this Eternal Fire, oh My Spouse, which burns incessantly in My Adorable Heart, all those who are willing to sacrifice themselves to that Everlasting Love, Who first sacrificed Himself for them."** (Black our emphasis.)

A holy priest once said that the more one's life is configured to the Passion of Jesus, the more you can trust the holiness of the person.

**O Son, Divine Lord, made man, crucify me with Yourself that I may become, in union with You, a sacrifice of praise for the glory of Your Father. (Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity.)**



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