

**Part IV –
The National Shrine -- *The Only Church*
Our Lady Mentions in this Devotion –
and the Organization of the Diary by Bishop Leibold**

**November 20, 1959: Dedication of the completed Shrine of the
Immaculate Conception in Washington, D. C.**

(Editor's Note: This Shrine is truly the Church of the American people and is under the authority of all the US Bishops. It is the largest Catholic Church in the Americas and the 8th largest Catholic Church in the world. Its 80 plus chapels depict the rich cultural heritage of our Nation and of nations around the world. In recent years the Hall of American Saints, honoring St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Rose Philippine Duchesne, and Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha has been added, attesting to the fruitfulness of the seed of Faith planted by our North American martyrs. The Shrine, with its splendid dome, is the spiritual capital of the Church in America and complements the dome of the National Capitol, the seat of our American government.)

(Also see Part I on the National Shrine at the beginning of this piece.)

**September 1959: Pope John XXIII's letter, given from Rome to
the American Faithful on the dedication of the National
Shrine.**

It was an extremely gratifying and enduring joy that filled our hearts on receipt of news...that a shrine is to be dedicated to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God. There now rises up to heaven a shrine, high and massive, wondrously bright within...The Virgin Mother of God is our Mother, our Queen, the sure way by which we approach most speedily to Jesus Christ, Who was given to us by her. But a temple built of stones is of little significance unless there arises a temple mystically erected within our minds. Therefore...let an altar of the Most Blessed Virgin be set up in the heart of each one of the faithful; let families, held together by the sanctity of marriage, by mutual love, by moral integrity and a common spiritual life, reproduce her virtues and be fortified by her protection.

December 20, 1959: Our Lady laments our ingratitude.

O my child, tell your spiritual father [Bishop Leibold] that I come again to warn and to plead. ... 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. 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, Page 34.)

(Editor's Note: Except on a few occasions, as when she showed herself as Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, Our Lady always came to Sr. Mary Ephrem in the manner in which she appeared on September 26, 1956, namely, as Our Lady of America.)

February 2, 1960: Bishop Leibold helped Sister organize her Diary of messages, “not for official publication, but only as a personal diary.” (*words of Bishop Leibold; The Archbishop to whom the messages were first given passed away and Bishop Leibold succeeded him.)

Bishop Paul F. Leibold, V.G. of the Cincinnati Archdiocese where the Sisters of the Precious Blood's motherhouse is located, personally helped Sister organize her manuscript in a more readable form. These “lines penned by a religious sister from her cloister cell,”(Foreword) were first handwritten or mimeographed. The bishop deleted mention of all places where apparitions or locutions occurred except that of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. where Our Lady herself placed the focus. In the Foreword, he called Sister's experiences “these supernatural happenings,” mentioning “special espousals with Christ” and the designation as “the Little White Dove.” He then had Sister “type” the messages, “not for official publication, but only as a personal diary,”(his words in Foreword), author anonymous, to protect Sister Mary Ephrem's identity and hidden life; she remained unnamed. The 1960 printing was a typed copy of her manuscript. In the Diary, Sister is referred to as “a religious Sister,” the “Little White Dove,” or “this Sister.” The first copies of the Diary were given only to the necessary religious superiors and Church officials and several sisters within the cloister, not to the unrestricted general public. Some time later, the bishop advised Sister to have the diaries printed in their private convent print shop. It is not clear what the legal definition of “published” was before the Copyright Law changed in 1978. Unpublished works were protected by common law. The Diary shows in the Library of Congress in 1984, registered as an “unpublished work,” and was then copyrighted as the complete 48-page Diary in 1989, with the required copyright notice to protect from infringement. This was after Archbishop Leibold's death in 1972; he could not have approved the later messages, but that does not invalidate them. The entire 48-page Diary was re-copyrighted in 1993 with the refined image on the current cover. (A judge recently put the 1960 and 1970 printings in public domain.) A judge can only make a decision

on arguments presented. Accepting that, we must focus on the greater and more urgent issue of a further study of the messages, as the first study has been called “flawed” by Josephologist and Mariologist Msgr. Arthur B. Calkins. Keeping the integrity and purity of the messages demands there be no additions, deletions or changes, except by legitimate church authority with respect to faith and morals, but not to personal content. This is a personal diary.

Sister Monica Schrott, OCD, and the Latrobe Statue of Our Lady of America.

1960’s: Sister Monica Schrott’s effort with the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception extends over two decades.

Sister Monica Schrott, OCD, a cloistered Carmelite sister in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, met Sister Mary Ephrem Neuzil in the 1960’s and they became dear friends. In her own personal handwriting, Sister Monica kept a copy of Sister Mary Ephrem’s writings on Our Lady of America.

From her cloister, Sister Monica assisted Sister Mary Ephrem’s mission by corresponding with the National Shrine directors, over a period of twenty years, to place there a white statue of Our Lady of America that she had made by Archangelo Cascieri of Boston, MA. Sister Monica worked closely with Bishop Leibold, Sister Mary Ephrem, Bishop Connare of Pittsburgh, PA, and Rev. Msgr. William F. McDonough, the director of the National Shrine in Washington, D.C., for the enthronement of a statue of Our Lady of America in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception as Our Lady had requested in 1956.

(Editor’s Note: The “Latrobe” statue made with the help of Sr. Monica and several bishops, done *for and with Sr. Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil*, resided with the Carmelites of the Assumption in Latrobe, PA forty plus years until the Mother Prioress had it personally taken to and presented to Sister Joseph Therese at the Our Lady of America Center in Fostoria, Ohio. This was after Sister Mildred’s death in 2000 and just



Latrobe statue done with the help of Sr. Monica Schrott

before Sister Monica's death in 2005. Thereafter, this "Latrobe statue", sometimes called the "archival statue," as it was the first, was allowed to reside with Mother Angelica's sisters for a period of time and was used for promotional purposes. **Who paid for the statue? The sisters at the Carmelite Monastery were nuns in solemn perpetual vows. Sister Monica, however, was the chosen Extern Sister and "Guardian of the Cloister." She was a religious sister in perpetual simple vows and could, therefore, own her inheritance, though it could not be used without the permission of the Prioress. She asked permission to use her inheritance to pay for the statue known as "the Latrobe or archival statue." Surely this statue belonged to Sister Mildred and the Our Lady of America archives in Fostoria as it was paid for by Sister Monica, for Sister Mildred, and there is no written record of a bill of sale or of a gift of the statue to anyone else.**

The Medal, Prayer Leaflets, and Archbishop Leibold's Death.

April 4, 1960: Our Lady's message to the Archbishop regarding the medal.

Tell His Grace, my beloved son, that it is through the medal that he will receive the sign for which he asks. I ask him to have the medal struck and distributed everywhere and he will receive not only the one sign for which he has asked but so many, so many that he will have cause to be greatly astonished.

My child, God works often through little and humble things and such instruments should never be despised but accepted and used with love and gratitude. It will be through the medal that God's Will will be manifested and glorified and my desires carried out to the very end.

I place my confidence in my faithful sons, the bishops, who will not fail to take up my cause and make it bear much fruit for sanctification among so many and countless souls.

Send this word then to my beloved son, the Archbishop, and have no fear sweet child for I will keep my promise, for I am the ever-faithful Virgin.

As Sister Mary Ephrem hesitated because of certain doubts and fears concerning the reception of this message, Our Lady appeared in the early morning hours of April 6, 1960, to gently reproach her for her lack of confidence. Our Lady told her not to delay in sending the bishop the words she had written. Our Lady said, "My children must know my desires. If my desires are not fulfilled much suffering will come to this Land."

(Editors Note: The prior Archbishop passed away and Bishop Leibold

succeeded him and carried out Our Lady's request for the medal, in cooperation with Bishop George J. Rehring of the Toledo diocese).

May 1, 1961: Bishop Leibold puts his imprimatur on Sister Mary Ephrem's sketch of the medal.

(Editor's Note: In response to "May Day" celebrations for workers by the Communists, Pope Pius XII had instituted the feast of St. Joseph the Worker on May 1, 1955. Surely it was his expression of gratitude for St. Joseph's protection during World War II! See page 30 of the Diary. Bishop Leibold chose this day to approve the medal, our shield against evil.)



Bishop Leibold then had the medal struck and personally paid for all medals until his death in 1972. He designed the prayer pamphlet to go with the medal. It contained the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception and the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity, both written by Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem,) as well as the magnificent explanation of the medal itself.

(See Pgs. 47-48 of the Diary for this pamphlet information.)

May 22, 1962: Bishop George J. Rehring of the Toledo diocese favors distribution of the medal by Bishop Leibold.

Sister Mary Florecita Bidart, foundress of the Our Lady of Nativity Cloister, wrote to Mother Aquinas of the Sisters of the Precious Blood informing her that Bishop Rehring (Toledo diocese), under whose authority Bishop Leibold worked in this regard, was in favor of distributing the medal that symbolized so well the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity, lived out so perfectly in the Holy Family, model for every family on earth and source of all true holiness. Bishop Rehring gave Sister suggestions for the promotion of the devotion and for teaching and living the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling.

Mother Mary Aquinas wrote Sister Florecita on August 31, 1961:

I was very happy to hear that Bishop Leibold will go ahead with the medal himself. It is a great relief to me to know that it is being made, and we hope it eventually will be circulated. I have great confidence in the message of our Blessed Lady.

January 25, 1963: Imprimatur on the Prayer to the

Indwelling Trinity.

Paul F. Leibold, V.G. of Cincinnati, OH, gave his Imprimatur and Daniel Pilarczyk, S.T.D., his Nihil Obstat to the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity.

July 1, 1963: Archbishop Leibold writes regarding this private devotion and does not support any high pressure pushing of it.

First, I received the leaflets on our Lady of America. I will gradually drop them around places as the opportunity presents itself. "I still think of it as a private devotion and await our Lady's action to make the seeds you are planting grow and, as it were, cause a spontaneous demand for the object of devotion, rather than engaging in any high pressure pushing of it."
(Archbishop Leibold letter to Sister, July 1, 1963.)

(Note: Archbishop Leibold's emphasis was on "understanding" and "living" the message, particularly the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling, the doctrine of sanctifying grace and living in a state of grace.)

June 18, 1970: Archbishop Leibold writes Rev. Msgr. William F. McDonough at the basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The Archbishop wrote to Msgr. McDonough regarding Sr. Monica Schrott's request to place a statue of Our Lady of America in the National Shrine in Washington, D.C. Instead of the statue at that time, a small plaque was placed outside offices at the Shrine the following year. Msgr. McDonough traveled to New Riegel, OH to meet with Sister Mary Ephrem personally. His June 29, 1970 letter thanks them for his wonderful reception.

September 3, 1971: Archbishop Leibold makes wooden plaques.

Archbishop Leibold made a series of wooden plaques of Our Lady of America. One hung in the Our Lady of the Nativity Convent in New Riegel, Ohio, and was used in processions at the convent. Another hung in his Chancery office in the Cincinnati, OH diocese. Later, one was presented to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception by pilgrims from New Riegel, OH.

In a letter to William Weberding of Weberding Woodworking Shop, the Archbishop made a proposal for the construction of a wooden or marble statue for an outdoor Shrine to Our Lady of America at the New Riegel Convent. He had a patron's offer of \$2000 for the statue which

would aid in promoting devotion to Our Lady of America at the Convent where they were regularly celebrated.

He also had 3 petite ivory statues made in India. Just before his death, Archbishop Leibold arranged a meeting with Luigi Riamondi, the Apostolic Delegate from Washington, D.C., Msgr. Boffa, and his personal secretary, Fr. Francis Lammeier, to present a small ivory statuette to the Holy See and the Catholic Church. Posthumously, this statuette was presented to the Apostolic Delegate in August 1972, on behalf of Archbishop Leibold, and is presumed to be in the Vatican Museum.

November 9, 1971: The Diary, first printed as a personal diary, was reprinted, still not for official publication. (See February 2, 1960.)

February 22, 1972: Our Lady's image in the home.

When a picture or statue of myself as Our Lady of America is placed in the home and honored there, then will my Son bless His people with peace. Believe in me, dear child, believe in me, my love will never fail you. (Diary, Page 36.)

June 1, 1972: Archbishop Paul F. Leibold dies suddenly.

Before his death, Archbishop Leibold of Cincinnati, OH, had determined to build a large outdoor Shrine to Our Lady of America at the New Riegel, OH cloister property. The Archbishop's Secretary, Father Lammeier, believed the archbishop would have officially approved this



message, working in conjunction with the Toledo bishop as always, had he lived long enough to do so. Archbishop Joseph A. Bernardin succeeded him. For whatever reason and by Divine Providence, Archbishop Leibold had chosen to keep all correspondence with Sister Mildred removed from the diocesan archives and had advised his secretary, that upon his death, all documents were to be sent immediately to Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil at the Our Lady of America Center in Fostoria, Ohio, for safe keeping. Archbishop Bernardin had nothing to do with the devotion to Our

Lady of America. In 1982, Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, who had given the Nihil Obstat to the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity on January 25, 1963, became the new archbishop of the Cincinnati, Ohio archdiocese.

Archbishop Paul F. Leibold was born on December 22, 1914, in Dayton, OH. He was educated at the Marianists' Chaminade High School and the University of Dayton in Ohio. On May 18, 1940, he was ordained at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral in Cincinnati, OH. He was made Auxiliary Bishop in Cincinnati on April 10, 1958, Titular Bishop of Trebenna on June 17, 1958, Bishop of Evansville, IN on April 4, 1966, and Archbishop of Cincinnati on July 23, 1969, where he served his people well until his sudden, untimely death on June 1, 1972. The Archbishop was greatly loved and revered by his flock as evidenced by the overflowing crowd that attended his funeral. He is buried in Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Cincinnati.

The Archbishop's personal secretary, Father Francis G. Lammeier, wrote Sister Mary Ephrem on August 13, 1972:

With things as busy as they are, I still do not have time to think. I still am not fully aware that the Archbishop died. I am no dreamer; I know he is dead and is enjoying his reward, but I just cannot realize it or be aware of it. I still think often, he will come into the office or I will see him and he will give me that quiet and peaceful smile. I think of him so often. I said many times, I was privileged to be associated with him. He kept a tremendous schedule. If I had been Secretary and Master of Ceremonies with any other Bishop with this schedule, I would have been out of my tree. But with him, it was indeed a pleasure. Often, I got tired and certainly he did, but there was no pressure of any kind. He was a kindly, understanding, and humble priest. He did not stand on dignity or position but was just himself. He was the Archbishop, and I most assuredly respected him for his position, but he was also a dear friend.

In August Father Lammeier sent the plaque of Our Lady of America that hung in the Cincinnati Chancery and a large collection of letters/ personal writings of the Archbishop's to Sister Mildred for safe keeping and future study. **He confirmed how deeply the Archbishop believed in this message and had expressed his willingness to speak to any bishop in this regard. No bishop ever contacted him.** In recent years, several versions of Sister's personal Diary have appeared in the public with the later messages removed; one version even removed *The Prayer to the Indwelling Trinity*, a prayer at the very heart of and essential to the message that centers on the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling of the Trinity as the source of all holiness. Copyright is an author's protection of the integrity of his or her work. Destroy copyright and you can easily destroy the integrity of the work as well.