

What Is Our Lady of America® Really Asking For?

Prayer and Penance! Reform! Reform! Reform!

The most explicit elements in the message of Lourdes are prayer and penance. These two points were so tightly bound together in Bernadette's life and words that it is impossible to present them separately. They spring from the message itself. The Virgin asked Bernadette to pray and to do penance for sinners, or "for the conversion of sinners."

For her, prayer, penance and conversion were all one, because prayer is doing, not dreaming; it involves the will; it is this act whereby we turn toward God (this is the meaning of conversion), and the rest follows. So prayer for the conversion of others is intimately tied to personal conversion.

(BERNADETTE SPEAKS, A Life of Saint Bernadette in Her Own Words, by Rene Laurentin, Pauline Books, English edition, 2000).

An amazing aspect of the message of OUR LADY OF AMERICA® to Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil is its deep connection to Our Lady's appearance at Lourdes. Lourdes is not only where Our Lady identified herself as "the Immaculate Conception," a name she repeats and enlarges in the message of Our Lady of America, ® the Immaculate Virgin, but it is the beginning of the Marian Age. Mary takes on a prophetic role as she appears around the world, weeping and calling her wayward children back to God as she begs and begs for a reform of life and a return to Faith and Purity. Like the message to Bernadette, Our Lady's message to Sr. Mildred is about the power of prayer and penance to change the world and to bring about the conversion and salvation of souls, a responsibility we all share through Baptism! We are our brothers' keepers! This call is always a call first to the interior life and to miracles of the soul before all else. Our Lady speaks her desire most clearly to Sister Mildred.

Reform of life is what I ask as the sign and proof of my children's love for me. ... What am I to do, child of my heart, when my children turn from me? The false peace of this world lures them

and in the end will destroy them. They think they have done enough in consecrating themselves to my Immaculate Heart. It is not enough. That which I ask for and is most important many have not given me. What I ask, have asked, and will continue to ask is reformation of life. There must be sanctification from within. I will work my miracles of grace only in those who ask for them and empty their souls of the love and attachment to sin and all that is displeasing to my Son. Souls who cling to sin cannot have their hands free to receive the treasure of grace that I hold out to them. (Diary, pg. 16.)

Without prayer and penance for our own conversion and for that of others, Our Lady indicates consecration to her is ineffectual. Any enthronement in our National Shrine will only ring true if Jesus is indeed first enthroned in our hearts.

My Immaculate Heart desires with great desire to see the kingdom of Jesus my Son established in all hearts. How I have pleaded with my children to open their hearts to Him, but most are cold and indifferent. Has ever a mother shown more love and interest in her children's welfare than I have done? O my little one, daughter of my Pure Heart, you must pray with greater fervor and offer yourself with greater love to the Heart of my Son. (Diary, pg. 17)

Without fulfilling this deeper, more humbling request of Our Lady's call for conversion, one might consider a rushed enthronement of Our Lady of America's® statue in our National Shrine mere show and empty gesture that mocks a true understanding of the depth and height and breadth of the message of Our Lady of America® and of its importance for the salvation of America, the repair of our Church, and the salvation of the whole world. How can America accept and carry out a mandate from heaven to lead the rest of the world back to Faith and Purity, to the peace of Christ, when America is in the midst of moral decay and on the brink of self-destruction? The Natural and the Moral Law are increasingly in reverse. Many who call themselves Catholic do not obey Christ's Vicar on earth, nor the true teachings of the Catholic Church. Many who call themselves Christian compromise the teachings of the Gospel. The just are persecuted and the unjust are glorified and rewarded. We must wonder if our sins of omission outnumber the horrific crimes of commission that our laws continue to endorse and promote! Where are the defenders of the Faith? Where are the martyrs today? Where is our spiritual leadership under the empowerment and enlightenment of the

Holy Spirit? We are in the greatest spiritual battle of all time, not only for our own souls, but for the soul of our Nation, our Church, our families, and our world.

On May 8, 1957, St. Michael, sounding much like the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord, echoes Our Lady's tone of urgency for this much needed reform of life before peace can be granted to our sinful generation.

Write! I am Michael, Angel Captain of the Lord God of Hosts. I come to announce the coming of the kingdom, the kingdom of peace. The time is at hand. Repent, bestir yourselves, O sons of men, repent and make ready your hearts that the King may establish His Kingdom within you. Do not delay, or the time of grace will pass and with it the peace you seek. (Diary, pg. 17.)

How long can we listen to the cries of our Mother and refuse to heed her warning and her pleading? How long? Come, sit at her feet with me and let us gaze upon her and feel her cries vibrating within us!

...behold then my Heart pierced by a cruel sword. Oh, what grief my children have caused me....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. !...Do not disregard the voice of your Mother. It is the voice of love trying to save you from eternal ruin. (Diary, pgs. 19, 34, 16.)

And again our dear Mother says:

My sweet child, unless my children reform their lives, they will suffer great persecution. If man himself will not take upon himself the penance necessary to atone for his sins and those of others, God in His justice will have to send upon him the punishment necessary to atone for his transgression. (Diary, pg. 17.)

And again and again, Our Lady warns and pleads with us:

My beloved daughter, what I am about to tell you concerns in a particular way my children in America. Unless they do penance by mortification and self-denial and thus reform their lives, God will visit them with punishments hitherto unknown to them.

My child, 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.

My dear children either you will do as I desire and reform your lives, or God Himself will need to cleanse you in the fires of untold punishment. You must be prepared to receive His great gift of peace. If you will not prepare yourselves, God will Himself be forced to do so in His justice and mercy. (Diary, pg. 21)

To her beloved sons, the priests, “so cherished and greatly blessed among the sons of men,” Our Lady bids them “be careful to uphold the sanctity and dignity of your calling.”

If I ask for reform of life, it is first from the chosen that I look for it. They must by the example of a sacrificial life lead the way for souls to union with Christ, honoring the Father by putting on His Spirit and His likeness in all things. (Diary, pg. 24)

Dear sons, I ask you to practice self-denial and penance in a special manner, because it is you who must lead my children in the way of peace. Yet this peace will come only by way of the sword, the flaming sword of love. If, therefore, you love my Son and wish to honor me, heed my admonition and be the first to give the example of a life of penance and self-denial. Thus, by sanctification from within you, you will become a bright and burning light to the faithful, who look to you for help and guidance. (Diary, pg. 20.)

Oh the love of our Mother trying to save us from the loss of our souls, from spiritual blindness and hardness of heart, from the lies of Satan and the seductions of the world that fan the flames of the flesh and the lust for power, wealth and glory. The Christian, and especially the chosen ones, must be radical “signs of contradiction” to the ways of the world. Let us kneel at her feet and pray! *Oh dear Mother, grant us the grace to heed your call for prayer and penance! For a reform of life! For complete and lasting conversion! Make us grateful for your powerful intercession on our behalf. Let us simply love you with all our hearts!*

Write these words upon your hearts, my dear children, because of the compassion I have for you in my Immaculate Heart. Oh, if you knew the punishments I am holding back from you by my pleading and intercession on your behalf. ..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!

Bernadette chose a life of prayer and penance, and poverty--in fact and in spirit--and gave her life for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. Sister Mildred accepted untold rejection, persecution, physical and spiritual suffering, refusing our dear Lord nothing-- as symbolized in her acceptance of the crown of thorns and the cross from His very own hands-- for the salvation of souls. The question remains. How will we answer Our Mother as she presents this question to each one of us?

Will you do as I wish at last, my children?...or will you allow your Mother to weep in vain? (Diary, pg. 12)

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