

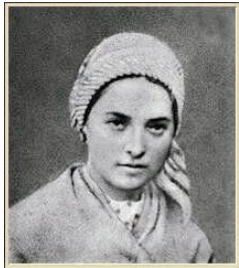
# Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of America

## *Bernadette Soubirous and Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil*

**My Heart grieves over My children in the world. Their hearts are being drawn farther and farther away from Me. They will not even listen to My Mother, because they have never been taught to listen.** [Words of Jesus to Sister.]

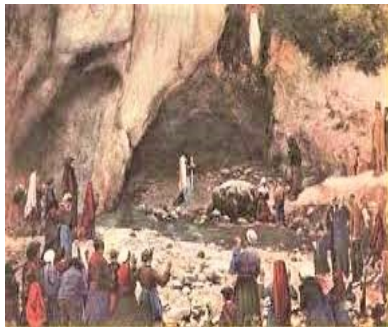
(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, Tiffin, OH, Pg. 3.)

How like the times of old when God sent prophets to call people to repentance and salvation, but the people did not listen. In these times, God sends His own Mother with the hope we will surely listen to her, but do we?



On February 11, 1858, Our Lady appeared in Lourdes, France, to a 14-year-old peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, born January 7, 1844, one of nine children. When her father fell on hard times a cousin offered them refuge in the lowest, filthiest room of his home called the **dungeon** because it had previously been a prison.

Bernadette suffered from childhood illnesses and cholera and the dampness of the dungeon worsened her asthma. Missing school often, her classmates were much younger and often mocked her as stupid or feebleminded.



That February 11, Bernadette had gone to gather wood for the home fire when suddenly she saw a beautiful lady in the cave of Massabielle. The Lady wore a white veil and gown with a blue sash, golden roses on her feet, and held a pearl rosary in her hand. After Bernadette prayed the rosary, the Lady disappeared. At the February 14 appearance, Bernadette became immobile and had to be carried home. On the third visit, Bernadette asked the Lady **“what is your name and what is it that you wish from me?”** The Lady simply smiled and asked

her to come back for the next 15 days. As the visits continued, curiosity brought the crowds. By the 6<sup>th</sup> visit the police said no more visits, but Bernadette persisted, and the Lady entrusted her with secrets for her alone which she must never reveal, not even to the Pope. At the 8<sup>th</sup> visit, the Lady asked for penance and told Bernadette to kiss the ground as penance and eat the grass growing nearby, an act of humility and penance she repeated at each new visit. On the 9<sup>th</sup> visit, Bernadette was told to dig in the ground until she found water, then to drink from the muddy water. Many thought her crazy. By the 12<sup>th</sup> visit, the muddy water had become a spring of clear water. A mother placed her baby with a paralyzed hand in it and the baby was cured; the first miracle! Many more would follow! On the 13<sup>th</sup> visit, the Lady said to **tell the priests to come here in procession and build a chapel where she had appeared.** The parish priest, however, reprimanded Bernadette as a liar and said to ask the Lady her name. On the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> visit, when asked her name, the Lady again just smiled. On the 16<sup>th</sup> visit, the Lady gave her name: **“I am the Immaculate**



**Conception.**” The priest marveled, as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception had just been defined by Pope Pius IX four years earlier in 1854. Bernadette would be totally ignorant in this matter. After the 17<sup>th</sup> visit, the authorities closed the grotto to keep people away, but Bernadette went to the grotto from a distant side and saw Our Lady for the 18<sup>th</sup> and last time, more beautiful than ever. The grotto did not re-open until October 1858 at the orders of Emperor Louis Napoleon Bonaparte III after the imperial son born to him and Empress Eugenie, an advocate for Catholics and for Bernadette, was healed in the spring waters. Lourdes now has nearly five million visitors a year, praying for healing from so many diseases.



Bernadette joined the Sisters of Charity and became a nun, Sister Mary Bernard. She died April 16, 1879, at age 34 and was buried on the grounds of the convent in Nevers, France. On September 22, 1909, her body was exhumed and was found to be incorrupt. It was exhumed a second time on April 3, 1919, and was still incorrupt after 40 years. Bernadette’s body was then placed in a coffin of gold and glass and is viewed by many today who come to see this miracle at the convent.

References: [https://www.directfromlourdes.com/apparitions\\_at\\_lourdes](https://www.directfromlourdes.com/apparitions_at_lourdes)  
Fr. Rene Laurentin, BERNADETTE SPEAKS, Daughters of St. Paul, 2000.



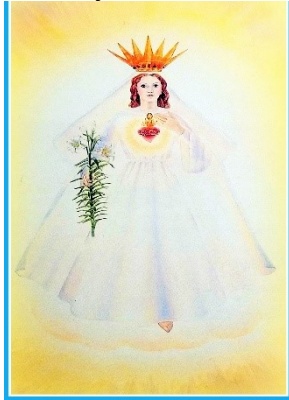
Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, on the other hand, was born August 2, 1916, while World War I raged on. Her parents, John and Anna Smerda Neuzil, came to America from Austria where John had been a gardener for Johann Strauss. Mildred was the first child born in America. At age 14 she entered the Sisters of the Precious Blood; at age 17 she made first vows; and at age 23 made final vows. It was at this time she began to have mystical experiences which she thought were common to all sisters.



In the 1940’s locutions with Jesus and Mary Sister Mildred came to understand that her mission was for the sanctification of the family, which would be accomplished through imitation of the Holy Family, the Trinity on earth. She confided her mystical experiences to Father Paul Leibold, her spiritual director, who found her to be of sound mind. He advised her to write them down, for they began to take the form of a special devotion to Our Lady. The central theme was renewal of the family and interior holiness through union with the Divine Indwelling, which means living in the state of sanctifying grace which gives us a share in God’s own life. Sister’s first assignments were in the Washington, D.C. area, the Chancery in Cincinnati, Ohio, and then Kneipp Springs in Rome City, Indiana. When Father Leibold became bishop of Evansville, Indiana, Sister was sent to serve in North Dakota, after which she came back to Cincinnati. So many places!



In 1954 and 1955, St. Michael and St. Gabriel appeared. Thereafter Sister was sent back to Rome City for a few months when, on September 25, 1956, Our Lady appeared to her in the Sisters' chapel as Our Lady of Lourdes where she had called herself, **"I am the Immaculate Conception."** What heaven connects no one should put asunder! These two apparitions, Lourdes and Our Lady of America, center on Our Lady's singular privilege of the Immaculate Conception and are deeply bound together. The United States had named Our Lady as the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of our land, already in 1846, twelve years before the apparitions at Lourdes. Then, on September 26,



1956, Our Lady appeared again, saying: **"I am Our Lady of America. I desire that my children honor me, especially by the purity of their lives."** (The Diary, Pg. 12.)

The apparitions and messages continued until 1984. Like all Our Lady's apparitions, they are a call to prayer, repentance, reform of life (by which is meant holiness from within), renewal of family life and working toward peace. Early on Our Lady gave Sister the design for a medal to be struck and worn with great devotion for personal protection. That was done in 1961. Our Lady also asked that her image, with either photo or statue, be enthroned in our homes for protection of the family. Her final request, for the protection of our Nation, is for our bishops, her beloved sons, to carry a statue of her as Our Lady of America in solemn procession and then place it in a position of honor in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., honoring her there as **"Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin."** Is anyone listening to our dear Mother? Is anyone worried about protecting our Nation?



These two messages are so similar. They show how God chooses the lowly for His great works, the poor and the humble, not the most educated, powerful or wealthy, for the latter fall too easily into the errors of self-glorification and self-will. They show how God gives the necessary grace for those called to carry out a special mission, and He gives them special favors and assistance. But, likened to Jesus in grace, these souls are called to a high degree of configuration to His Passion, becoming victim souls for the salvation of others. At Lourdes, Our Lady specifically brought forth spring waters for the healing of the sick, and most people go there to be healed of grave illnesses, though they can come away with spiritual healing as well. Kneipp Springs at the Rome City, Indiana property, where Our Lady first appeared to Sister Mildred, has mineral waters which were used in the past for their medicinal purposes, but they were there before Our Lady's appearance. She did not address them in her apparitions nor make any promise of healing in their regard. At Lourdes Our Lady directed Bernadette to tell the priests to hold processions to the grotto and to build a chapel there where she had appeared, but Our Lady of America made no request for a chapel where she had appeared in Rome City, but did request the hierarchy to do a solemn procession with her statue and enthrone it in the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. She asked for pilgrimages to the National Shrine and promised miracles, not of the body like at Lourdes, but of the soul. This is what she means by miracles greater than those granted at Lourdes and Fatima, not natural but supernatural miracles, greater in nature. During the forty plus years of locutions, illuminations and apparitions, and a transport to Lourdes to visit with Bernadette as a girl, Sister Mildred was stationed in at least 10 different



locations, not one of which is actually named in her Diary, not even the place of her first appearance. Why is that? Simply because Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, Sister's spiritual director of thirty-two years, advised her not to mention any places so that Our Lady's emphasis on the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. would remain the focal point of this devotion.

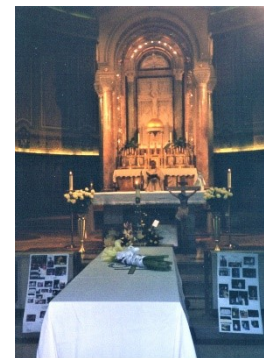
**“This is my shrine, my daughter, I am very pleased with it. Tell my children I thank them. Let them finish it quickly and make it a place of pilgrimage. It will be a place of wonders. I promise this. I will bless all those who, either by prayers, labor, or material aid, help to erect this shrine.” ... She also requested a statue made according to this likeness [Our Lady of America] and placed, after being solemnly carried in procession, in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. She wishes to be honored there in a special way as Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin. (Diary, Pg. 14.)**



As noted in Sister Mildred's complete forty-eight-page Diary, the messages of a public nature continued after Archbishop Leibold's death until 1984. On January 3, 1984 Sister asked Our Lady if there would be a nuclear war because everyone was so afraid.

**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. (Diary, Pg.45.)**

While Bernadette became a sister after the apparitions, Sister Mildred was already a Sister when hers occurred. Bernadette suffered greatly and died at age 34; Sister Mildred suffered greatly and died January 10, 2000 at age 83. Her funeral service was held at the Basilica of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio. While Bernadette's body was exhumed twice and found incorrupt, we trust that, if and when Sister Mildred's body is exhumed, it, too, will be found to be incorrupt. When asked if she would be canonized one day, Sister replied, **“Yes, but not because of me but because of the importance of this message.”** Remember, Our Lady said she had come to America as a last resort, and Pope St. John Paul II said **“The way America goes is the way the world goes.”** No wonder Our Lady gave the United States this heavenly mandate to lead the world to peace, the peace that comes from recognizing God in every person, which will eliminate hate, greed and war. Our Lady also warned that evil is enveloping the world and is focused on America because of this mandate from heaven for America to lead the world to true peace, Christ's peace. We ask you now, pray that Our Lady will speak to the hearts of our bishops as she promised, so they will understand and do as she has asked to help us heal our land!



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