

Saints of the Divine Indwelling, Martyrs of Love

“May your soul be His sanctuary, a resting-place for Him on this earth where He is so grievously offended. May He make of your soul a little heaven, where He may happily rest. Take away from it everything that might offend His divine eye. Live alone with Him. Wherever you are, whatever you may be doing, He never leaves you. Therefore, stay always with Him. Enter into the depths of your soul; you will always find Him there, longing to do you good. I say a prayer for you that St. Paul used to say for his converts: he asked that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, that they might be rooted in charity. This expression is so deep, so mysterious. Yes, may God Who is all love be your unchanging dwelling place, your cell and your cloister in the midst of the world. Remember that He abides in the inmost center of your soul, as in a sanctuary and He wills to be loved there even to adoration.”

(Marie-Michel Philipon, O.P., THE SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE OF SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY, letter to Madame de B., Summer of 1905, St. Pius X Press, Pg. 51.)

Saint Elizabeth of the Trinity was born July 18, 1880, on a military base in France. Her father died when she was seven. At age 21 she entered a Discalced Carmelite order where she died of Addison’s disease five years later, November 9, 1906. She was canonized by Pope Francis on October 16, 2016. Elizabeth made Jesus’ words her life: **“If any one loves Me, he will keep my Word, and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him.”** (John 14:23.) Her spirituality centered on the Indwelling Trinity so much so that she came to be called **‘the saint of the Divine Indwelling.’** In Baptism we are all called to partake of the Divine Nature, to enter into the family of God, and to live in our own interior castle with our Indwelling Triune God.

Fr. Philipon expounds on Elizabeth’s spiritual saturation with the Indwelling Trinity. Moved by the doctrine of the Trinity, Emmanuel, God dwelling with us and within us, Elizabeth, in a seemingly ordinary but contemplative life, entered into deep, personal union with God in the depths of her soul. She referred to this reality as **“heaven on earth, for heaven is God and God is in my soul.”** (Philipon, Pg. 50.) She applied herself vigorously to the interior life, stating: **“My only devotional practice is to enter into myself and lose myself in Those Who are there.”** (Philipon, Pg. 49.) She spoke of collapsing into her Holy Three. Because of Elizabeth’s focus on Emmanuel, God-with-us, she had a great devotion to Mary as Our Lady of the Incarnation, Mother of the Word-made-flesh, dwelling amongst us. She called Mary the ***Janua Coeli***, the gate of heaven through whom souls ascend to the Trinity. Like Mary, she knew it was through surrender of one’s own will to the Will of God that one found true freedom and communion in Love. With a deep sense of connection in the Mystical Body of Christ she felt compelled to suffer with the Crucified for the salvation of souls. She meditated often on the Crucified Christ and longed for martyrdom, if not in blood, then surely in love. She understood no life is born without pain and no victory is won without sacrifice and that all suffering is redemptive. She longed to be another humanity in which Christ could perpetuate His life of reparation and sacrifice, of praise and adoration. **“To be another Christ, but on the cross”** was her dream. (Philipon,, Pg. 119.) She reflected on St. Paul’s concept of **“praise of glory, *Laudem Gloriam*,”** praise of the Holy Trinity. She defined “praise of glory” as a soul who dwells with God and loves with a disinterested love, not seeking self but loving Him above all His gifts. She stated,

“Such a soul should surrender itself fully, blindly to this Will, so that it cannot possibly will anything but what God wills.” (Philipon, Pgs. 99-100.) In a letter to comfort her mother, distressed over losing her, Elizabeth identifies herself as a victim soul.

“It is the Good God who is pleased to immolate His little victim. This Mass that He is saying with me and of which His love is the priest, may last a long time yet, but the time in the hand of Him Who is sacrificing her does not seem long to the little victim. She can say that even if she walks the path of suffering, still she is on the way of happiness, that true happiness which no man can take from her.”
(Philipon, Pg. 119.)

Our society today is alienated from itself and has lost its soul, its reverence for silence and the interior life, for contemplation and mysticism, for any sense of God hidden in the depths of our souls, waiting to be found. Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, **another saint of the Divine Indwelling, another victim soul**, was born August 2, 1916, ten years after Elizabeth’s death. Mildred was chosen by God to be the humble messenger for Our Lady of America’s message to America and to the world, a message centered on the Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in every soul as the source of its holiness from within. Her mission was and is for the renewal of the Christian family, which placed her in the midst of the Holy Family, the trinity on earth and mirror of the heavenly one. As Jesus is the Heart of the Trinity in heaven, he is the Heart of the Holy Family and must be placed at the heart of every family on earth. Nazareth was God’s paradise, His heaven on earth, and our homes, too, must be such a paradise where God can walk once again among men. Our Lady asked Sister and asks all of us to help her save those who will not save themselves. Her challenge to America and to the world is for a reform of life, sanctification from within through sanctifying grace by which God makes His home in us. Our Lady asks us to study the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling so we can live it. She especially urged the youth to study it and live it so they might lead the youth of all the world in an urgently needed spiritual renewal and return to Faith and Purity.

(Reference: Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Lodi, Ohio.)

In November of 1957, Our Lady revealed herself to Sister Mildred as she really and truly was, **“Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within.”** (The Diary, Pgs. 22-23.) Mary always deferred to St. Joseph as the head of the Holy Family. In a letter dated August 12, 1958, Sister wrote her spiritual director, Father Paul F. Leibold, of this blessing from St. Joseph and his words on the **SECRET OF SECRETS, the desire of the Trinity to be known, loved and adored in the interior kingdom of our hearts.**

Kneel my beloved daughter, for God is about to reveal to you a secret of the interior life. Few there are who learn it, and fewer they who live it in its fullness. This SECRET, dear child, is living with Him Who is within you and has made of your soul His Kingdom. There are many who know this Doctrine, but few to whom God reveals its secret operation. Few souls there are who empty themselves of all things that they may possess this SECRET OF SECRETS, this ultimate glory of all living, this union with the Divine, ending in Eternal Vision. This Secret cannot be written, lovely child. Its deepest meaning will be made known to you in the interior depths of your child-like soul, in your humble heart, where LOVE has found Its resting place, Its palace beautiful. They who would possess for themselves this mysterious workings of the Divine Secret must strive to cultivate in *silence* and *humility* this love for the Eternal Being within them. We lived this life, beloved child, so to attain it, souls must imitate as far as possible the fullness of our union with The Indwelling God.

Not only was Sister Mildred like Elizabeth in this deep inner life with the Trinity in the depths of her soul, but also like her in the willingness to identify with the Crucified and to join Him in His redemptive Passion for the salvation of souls. In her earlier letter to Father Leibold dated August 6, 1956, Sister Mildred recounts an intimate encounter with the Suffering Jesus who offered her His crown of thorns and His Cross, asking if she would be willing to suffer for souls. Jesus was inviting her to be a victim soul like Himself. He always respects the great gift of free will.

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.

Both of these holy nuns modeled their lives on that First Woman whose Heart was pierced with the sword of the world's sins as surely as Jesus' Heart was pierced by the soldier's lance, spiritually splitting His Heart so wide open that we all might climb into its chamber of mercy and peace. We are not called to be an Elizabeth or a Mildred, but we have all been baptized into the Passion and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, we, too, must say "yes" to redemptive suffering and must accept the cross Jesus offers us in our own lives. We must accept His crown of thorns that bleeds away our pride and frees us to walk humbly with Him. We must walk our own Way of the Cross to Calvary with Jesus, allowing Him to offer us with Himself to the Eternal Father as a *Laudem Gloriam*, a hymn of praise to the most Holy and Blessed Trinity.

"Your love then becomes God-love because it embraces and contains the love of everyone. Heed this, sweet child, then you will despise no one, no matter what their conduct might be. The heart of my Son is open to anyone who wishes to enter and is closed to none." (The Diary, Pg. 43.)

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