

The Sword of Michael and the Flaming Torch!

The next incident took place in the fall of the year 1954, when I was stationed at a different house of the Congregation. I do not remember the exact date, as I did not intend ever saying anything about it. I was sitting in the room next to the kitchen with the intention of saying some prayers. Almost the very moment I began to pray, I saw an Angel. I knew this immediately, although the apparition did not reveal itself as such until later. I saw the Angel standing before me towards the left. He was dressed in a white robe or garment, which was perfectly plain and perfectly white. The whiteness of his robe stood out against the darkness about him. It was like a light in the midst of darkness. He was holding a green palm and a drawn sword in his left hand, the tips of both palm and sword resting against his left shoulder. I saw all this at a glance. The Angel said to me, "Receive the palm of victory." I became suspicious, I could not think of any victory of mine that deserved such a reward. Besides, it sounded a bit like flattery to me. I have always been wary of words of praise; they put me on my guard. Why was the palm not given to someone else more deserving of it than I? So I shook my head and resolutely went back to my prayers. But the Angel would not go.

He spoke again, "You do not believe me. Will you accept the cross?" For me this struck more nearly home. I said, "Yes, I will accept the cross."

To this he replied, "Then you will accept the palm and the sword. With the sword the saints conquered themselves, the world, and the devil. I am the Angel of Peace. I come to those whose hearts are attuned to the Voice of God. To such as these I remain a perpetual light through blinding darkness. I was sent by Him Who said, "I am the Light of the World." Later it was made known to me that the Angel of Peace was St. Michael.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 7-8, Fall of 1954, prior to Our Lady's appearance.)

The use of the sword is seen repeatedly in Sacred Scripture. We first encounter it in Genesis 3:24 when Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Paradise and God "stationed the cherubim and the fiery revolving sword, to guard the way to the tree of life." Paradise was lost by the original sin of our first parents. The sword represents a judgment upon them and their posterity, for in their pride they chose the lies of Satan to the truth of God; they failed to obey God's command. We see the sword elsewhere in Scripture delivering death to the enemies of God and His people. Who does not know the story of the young David killing the giant Goliath with a stone and a sling shot, but David also used the sword to cut off the head of the giant who represented a giant evil threatening to destroy God's people. We are familiar with

Peter's use of the sword in the Garden of Gethsemane to cut off the ear of the Roman soldier, and we know well Christ's response to put it away, for those who live by the sword die by the sword. We picture the Archangel Michael, Angel of Peace, Angel Captain of the Lord God of Hosts, wielding the sword against the devil who roams the world seeking souls to devour!

St. Michael tells Sister it is with the sword that the saints conquered themselves, the world, and the devil. What does he mean? Like so many things, the sword can be a means of life or a means of death. Water is necessary for life, for crops to grow, for cleansing, but water, too, can drown a person or flood the fields and destroy the crops. Scripture speaks of a double edged sword or a two edged sword for this same reason. We have seen how it can bring death and judgment, but the sword also symbolizes Life, Truth, Peace and Love. We speak of the sword of the Spirit and being slain in the Spirit, resting in His peace. The sword symbolizes the role of the prophet who speaks for God in sharp, cutting terms what is God's Truth and what we must do to be saved. In Joshua 5:13-15, as Joshua nears Jericho, he sees a man with drawn sword in hand who identifies himself as **"the captain of the host of the Lord..."** and bids Joshua to remove his sandals for he is on holy ground. The angel then instructs Joshua on what he must do for seven days, after which the walls of Jericho will come tumbling down and the city would be delivered into his hands. Isaiah 49:2-7 speaks of Isaiah's role as a prophet: **"He made of me a sharp-edged sword."** Why? **"I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."** Isaiah prophesied the virgin birth and ministry of the Messiah.

St. Paul, in Ephesians 6:10-18, tells us to

Put on the armor of God so that you may be able to stand firm against the tactics of the devil. For our struggle is not with flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens. Therefore, put on the armor of God that you may be able to resist on the evil day and, having done everything, to hold your ground. So stand fast with your loins girded in truth, clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, and your feet shod in readiness for the gospel of peace. In all circumstances, hold faith as a shield, to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Just as policemen enter dangerous situations wearing a bullet proof vest, so must we enter the battle against our culture of death and evil wearing the armor of God!

In Revelation 1:16 John tells of his vision of the returning Christ in all His glory, the firstborn of the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth, appearing like a son of man, and **"a sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth"** as He gave John His words to the angels of the seven churches. The sword is the Word of God Who is the

Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last word on everything! Jesus is that Word of God Who does the will of the Father and speaks only what the Father tells Him -- all that is necessary for our salvation! St. John's Gospel 1:1-6, reminds us:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

In the Last Supper discourse, Jesus tells his apostles that **“where I am going you know the way,”** but Thomas says if they do not know where he is going, how can they know the way? Jesus answered, **“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.”** That Word is like a laser beam, a super sharp point of truth, a truth Our Lady of America® affirmed when she said, **“There is only one true way to the Father,...only one way to eternal union. It is the way of the divine humanity.”** (Diary, Pg. 23.) When Jesus died on Calvary, the temple curtain was torn in two. So Jesus in His Spirit of Truth, His Word that is always faithful and true, will cut in two the veil that drapes our eyes in spiritual blindness and cut from our minds the lies of Satan that we, without God's Holy Spirit of discernment, have so unwittingly taken in. The sword represents death or life, curse or blessing, judgment or salvation, depending on how we experience it. The sword, the Spirit of truth, God's holy Word, is the means to conquering ourselves and our fallen nature dominated by the flesh and by sin. All Jewish males were bound by the law of circumcision as a sign to the rest of the world of God's covenant with them. When Jesus gave us His new covenant, He demanded that we no longer circumcise our flesh as a sign of belonging to Him, but that we circumcise our hearts, cut out the sin from our lives so we might be free and holy and righteous in His sight, sealed with the Spirit who delivers us from the bondage of the flesh and sin and raises us up to His own divine heights in glory and grace. The sword symbolizes discernment of what is true and good and holy from what is false and evil and ungodly. It is for cutting hatred and unforgiveness from our hearts and error and false teaching from our minds so we might walk in the light of God's Truth, with our hearts split wide open and exposed to the **Son-Light of God's Love and healing grace!**

On August 22, 1957, the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Our Lady came to Sister Mildred and said, **“My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.”** She spoke of wasted grace and constant refusals on our part to co-operate with her in the accomplishment of the Divine Will for our sanctification and salvation.

“I wish to gather about me, my tender child, soldier and valiant bearer of the torch, an army of brave lovers, who as my torchbearers will enkindle the fire of Divine Love in the souls of men. Only those who are strong in love can

become my soldiers to bear aloft, not the sword of destruction, but the sword of fire, the flaming torch of Divine Charity. (Diary, Pg. 19 – our emphasis!)

On the evening of February 11, 1958, Our Lady reaffirms her promise given at Fatima that

“My Immaculate Heart will win in the end, and the Spirit of Christ will dwell in the hearts of men. Those in whom this Spirit is not found will be condemned to eternal hell-fire.” (Diary, Pg. 23.)

The next day Our Lady spoke of the **sword in her heart, the sword of grief**. How can we not recall Simeon’s sharp, cutting, prophetic word to Mary at the Presentation of Jesus in the temple and see it come true in our neglect to hear the word of God and keep it as Mary did. How long must she weep for so many of her children who prefer eternal darkness to the eternal light of her Son’s flaming Heart of Love?

“My child, nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much. You see the sword in the Heart of your Mother. Suffering completed the work of divine grace in my soul. He who refuses to suffer will never abide in the Spirit of Christ; will never be formed into His image. ... Beloved daughter, you wonder at the sword and the deep wound it has made in my Heart. It is the sword of grief plunged therein by my children who refuse to let me teach them the true way. There is only one true way to the Father, my child, only one way to eternal union. It is the way of the divine humanity. It is through my Son, the Only-begotten of the Father, that souls attain perfect union with the Divinity, as perfect as human nature is capable of, aided by divine grace. (Diary, Pg. 23)

Later, after Our Lady’s February visit, St. Michael appeared again to Sister, no longer offering her the palm and the sword but **an immense flaming torch** and bid her carry it throughout the world. He returned the next night in the same manner. Sister states that on the following day she was interiorly enlightened during Mass.

It was made known to me that those, particularly the youth, who are willing wholeheartedly to follow Our Lady in her great battle against evil would bear the special title of “Torchbearers of the Queen.” This torch, of course, is Divine Love, for it is Love alone that will conquer hate and all that hate brings with it. (Diary, Pg. 25.)

When the angel Sultra, the Guardian and Protector of the United States of America appeared to Sister on August 22, 1981, he said:

“If the people of this Land carry out faithfully the instructions and pleadings of the Lord Jesus and the Virgin Mother then they will be following me to the hour of peace. With this sword of the Divine white flame of Love and the lightning bolts of His infinite Justice God will strike down his enemies and heal the repentant sinner. This Nation and all who follow in the pursuit of peace will know the protection of God and the destruction of those who fight

and seek to destroy them through the evil powers of the infernal spirits of darkness and hate.” (Diary, Pg. 41.)

The Book of Revelation speaks of Christ out of whose mouth come Words like a **sharp double edged sword** to proclaim the ultimate truth that He is the First and the Last; He is the Living One. **He is the Word of God and God’s Word is the flaming sword, the fiery torch of Divine Love.** Our speech must imitate the speech of the Savior, Son of the living God.

“Dear one, the misuse of the tongue, the power of speech is a terrible evil. From it comes hatreds of every kind—blasphemies, murders of the born and the unborn, the old and the unwanted. It is the tongue, speaking words of destruction, corruption and deceit that has caused and is causing to a most frightening degree the chaos that is happening among all men and nations.

The Word of God become Man spoke words of healing, forgiveness, kindness and compassion. He spoke harshly only of and to those who by their pride and deceit were leading His people astray.

With his tongue, He glorified the Father and gave hope and confidence to His people. Use your tongue, O my dear children, to praise the Trinity within you, to tell of the glory of Him who lives in you, and through you desires to speak words of wisdom, kindness and compassion. Do not prevent the Holy One from doing good through you by using your tongue as an instrument of evil.

O my children, you still aren’t listening. I see the destruction coming but you do not believe me. You can stem this tide of suffering if you at last do as I’ve been asking of you for so long. Renew your hearts, your spirits, by seeking and following the light of the Holy Spirit within yourselves and in the teachings of Holy Church.” (Diary, Pg. 44.)

Surely the sword of Michael, the sword that slays the ugly dragon, the ancient serpent, is the Word of God, His Spirit of truth, the fiery torch of Divine Love, the weapon of God’s people that alone will withstand the lies and deceits of Satan and discern true spirits from false ones, replacing hatred with love and revenge with forgiveness. Let us arm ourselves with the armor of God and feed on and devour His Word to strengthen ourselves for the spiritual battle that rages within and without in our world. Let us be that army of chaste soldiers Our Lady calls us to be, willing to fight to the death to preserve the purity of our souls. Let His Word set our hearts on fire with His Love, and may it set this whole world aflame with the glorious Light of His Truth.

O, Holy Spirit, I offer Thee my heart, cold as it is, and I beg Thee to let a ray of Thy light and a spark of Thy fire enter therein to melt the hardened ice of my iniquities. Thou Who did fill the soul of Mary with

immense graces, and did inflame the hearts of the apostles, vouchsafe also to set my heart on fire with Thy love.

Thou art a Divine Spirit, fortify me against evil spirits; Thou art a Fire, enkindle in me the fire of Thy love. Thou art a Light, enlighten me so that I may know eternal things; Thou art a Dove, give me great purity of heart. Thou art a Breath that is full of sweetness, dissipate the storms that my passions raise up against me; Thou art a Tongue, teach me the manner of praising Thee without ceasing. Thou art a Cloud, cover me with the shadow of Thy protection, and finally, Thou art the Author of all Heavenly gifts—Ah! I beseech Thee to grant them to me.

Vivify me by Thy grace; sanctify me by Thy charity; govern me by Thy wisdom; adopt me by Thy bounty as Thy child, and save me by Thine infinite mercy, so that I may never cease to bless Thee, to praise Thee, to love Thee, at first during my life on this earth, and afterwards, for all eternity in Heaven. Amen.

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