

# Mildred Marie Neuzil and the Will of God

## *The 67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of America*



**“The Will of the Father must be dearer to you than all else. This is the lesson every soul desiring intimate union with my Son must strive to learn.”** (Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, *The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA*, Pg 19, words of Our Lady.)

**Mildred’s Family:** Original documents identify Mildred’s parents, John and Anna (Smerda) Neuzil as Czech-speaking citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, composed of various nationalities under the rule of the Catholic Habsburg dynasty of Europe. Anna Smerda was born in Sivice, in the province of Moravia, on July 16, 1881. John was born in Sumice, Southern Moravia, on August 27, 1880. They were married on May 4, 1903 near their birthplace. When the Austro-Hungarian Empire



collapsed after World War I, Moravia became part of the newborn Czecho-Slovak Republic; hence, the Neuzils were of Czecho-Slovak origin. When John moved his family to Vienna in search of better living conditions, he worked as a gardener for Johann Strauss, King of the Waltz. A chapel in their home indicates this was a family seeking to live in union with God. Three of their seven children, John, Anna, and Irma, were born in Vienna.

**Mildred’s Birth:** The Neuzil family came to America between 1908 and 1911. They were listed on their Naturalization papers as citizens of the Czech Republic. William, Geraldine and Mildred were born in Brooklyn, New York. **Mildred was born August 2, 1916 and was baptized in Most Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn as Mildred Marie.** Shortly after, the family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where Grace, the last of the seven children, was born. Mildred attended Our Lady of Good Counsel School in Cleveland, Ohio and made Confirmation there. **Her Confirmation name was Theresa.**

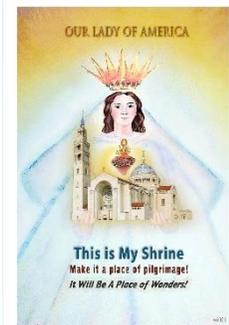
**Mildred’s Vocation and Mission for the Family:** On September 12, 1930, at age 14, Mildred entered the Congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton, Ohio. On August 15, 1933, at age 17, she took first vows and the name Sister Mary Ephrem, which means doubly fruitful. Her first assignments were in the Washington, D.C. area where Our Lady would center devotion to her as Our Lady of America in our Patronal Church. In 1937, Sister went to the Chancery in Cincinnati, Ohio where she would meet Father Paul F. Leibold whom God had chosen to be her spiritual director. There are no accidents with God in these assignments; they are significant to her mission. On August 15, 1939, Sister took final vows. Around this time Sister began to have mystical experiences which she thought were common to all religious. It was revealed to her that **her mission in life was to work for the sanctification of the family through imitation of the virtues of the Holy Family** in carrying out with love and fidelity **the humble duties of everyday life**, thus sanctifying the domestic life. Our Lady advised Sister regarding this mission.



**“Your mission is vast, my child. It reaches to the ends of the earth. It will continue until time is no more, because there will always be the need for the sanctification of the family and of souls. Fear not, small one, for it is through the most unlikely of instruments that God works His wonders. He chooses where the world would not. He makes that possible which the world deems impossible...He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory. Sweet child, let your humble heart be filled with great confidence, for my Son is in love with your lowliness and simplicity of heart. Make known to souls the preference my Son has for humility.” (1957 Letter to Father Paul F. Leibold, Sister’s spiritual director.)**

From 1933 to 1958, Sister was sent to numerous locations to teach kindergarten children or to do domestic work: Washinton D.C.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Rome City, IN; Denver; Missouri; North Dakota; back to Cincinnati and Ottawa in Ohio; and on to Arizona. **In 1956, the year Our Lady first appeared as Our Lady of America, Sister was in three different locations in Indiana in that one year—Ligonier, Rome City and Collegeville.** In 1957, she returned to Cincinnati and in 1958 she entered the Our Lady of Nativity Cloister in New Riegel, Ohio. She lived the last 19 years of her life in Fostoria, Ohio. Most of her life was spent in Ohio.

**The Apparitions and Locutions:** In the 1940’s Sister had various locutions with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph regarding renewal of the family through imitation of the virtues of the Holy Family, and renewal of the individual soul through union with the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity. That means living in the state of grace, sanctifying grace. In the Fall of 1954 and 1955, the archangels Michael and Gabriel appeared to Sister to prepare her for her mission for peace and purity through the Divine Presence, and to commission her as the first **“Torchbearer of the Queen,”** the herald of Our Lady’s mission for America. On the eve of the North American Martyrs, September 25, 1956, Our Lady first appeared to Sister as Our Lady of Lourdes, confirming her Queenship over America under the patronage of her Immaculate Conception. On September 26, 1956, 67 years ago, she appeared under the new image of Our Lady of America and asked that America be the Nation dedicated to her Pure Heart, and in return for this favor, gave America a mandate from heaven to lead the world



toward peace, the peace Christ brought with Him from heaven. That peace would come with recognition of God dwelling within each person, the **“Secret of Secrets”** as St. Joseph called it when he appeared and gave Sister his blessing. Our Lady of America asked that she be enthroned in every heart, in every home, and that **a statue of her as Our Lady of America be enthroned in Her Shrine, our Patronal Church, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D. C., after being carried in a solemn procession.** On October 13, 1956, Our Lady appeared holding a replica of the finished shrine even though it

was only half finished at the time. She said: **“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.”** (Diary, Pg. 14. This is the only church/Shrine and location named in the Diary.)

**A Higher Calling:** Early in the 1940’s Father Paul Leibold, Sister Mildred’s spiritual director, discerned that Sister’s true vocation was to the contemplative life, a calling higher than to the active life. It was a hunger deep within her soul. **Thus, in May of 1958, at his bidding, Sister Mildred entered the newly founded Our Lady of Nativity Cloister *within the active order*, in New Riegel, Ohio.** Bishop George J. Rehring of Toledo had gone to Rome to set the cloister up with





an independent novitiate so it could accept young women straight from the world and thus grow. It was around this time that the order changed from the black habit to a light grey one and gave the option to return to baptismal names. Sister then used the name **Sister Mildred Marie**. Later, the active order began a modernization process that was imposed on the cloister and meant abandoning the habit to secular clothes, losing the grill and solitude, and their own novitiate, which hindered any chance of growth. Their only desire had been to live a strict, Benedictine monastic life. Upon the advice of numerous clerics and religious, the seven remaining contemplatives were advised to separate from the active order. Letters went to the Mother Superior and to Pope Paul VI with the request to separate but retain their vows. Delays and increased tensions drove four of the seven away. When the Foundress, Sister Florecita Bidart, died, only Sister Mildred and Sister Joseph Therese remained. Since it requires three to constitute a canonical organization, the cloister was thereby dissolved by simple attrition.

**Sister's Exile and Haven of Rest:** Rome gave the two remaining sisters the choice to return to the active order, (Sister Joseph Therese had never been in the active order as she was the first to enter the cloister directly from the world) or separate and make private vows. Since the active order had never understood their contemplative way of life, they chose complete separation and, circa 1981, became a private association of the lay faithful living out their religious vocation in private vow. They made private vows under the direction of Father Edmund Mormon, Sister's new spiritual director after the death of Archbishop Paul F. Leibold in 1972. Our Lady told Sister:



**"My poor child, you have suffered much, but do not fear. Take courage, for soon a haven of rest will be given you—not a refuge from suffering and pain, but a nest of solitude for the little white dove, so dear to me and the Heart of my Son."** (Diary, Pg. 19.) *Her haven of rest, her nest of solitude, was her exile to a home provided by a benefactor in Fostoria, Ohio. Another home became the Center from which she continued to promote the messages of Our Lady of America. Sister remained essentially secluded for the last nineteen years of her life. We can be sure she was not alone but in the company of Jesus, Mary and Joseph and the angels. One witness tells how she was seated on a chair in a roomful of angels and held a white dove on her lap. Our Lady had promised, "Be at peace, dear one, I will never leave you."* (Diary, Pg 46.)

**A Second and Greater Mission in Life:** From early in her religious life Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil was often attacked by Satan. She wrote Father Paul Leibold how painful these attacks were, how she never knew when they would come or how long they would last. Only a few chosen souls are asked to be **victim souls, suffering intensely in expiation for the sins of others. Sister Mildred was one of those chosen victim souls.**

**Our Lord has since told me that one special part of my "mission" was to make reparation for sins against the chaste virtue. He said that to do this I would have to suffer these "attacks" off and on, all through my life. He asked if I were willing. I shuddered, Father, but how could I refuse Him? He is so good, besides His grace would always be there to help me. But it is a cause of much suffering to me and mental distress. I never know when these "attacks" will come, so can do nothing but pray. These latter attacks usually last only a few moments or minutes, sometimes longer, but they always seem to last such a long time and I am always in dread of them. (Early**

undated letter to her spiritual director.) Jesus also told Sister that no matter where she went, He would be there with her.

**Jesus Raises Sister Up in His Arms:** “Sister” Mildred Mary Neuzil, the name she went by after taking private vows, died on January 10, 2000. Her funeral service was held at the Basilica of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, Ohio. She is interred in a mausoleum **not open to the public** at St. Wendelin’s parish in Fostoria, Ohio, where she lived the last nineteen years of her life. Notes from July of 1955 recount this passage from Jesus to Sister:

**If I have brought thee low, my poor child, that thou art graveling upon the earth, know that it is for thy good, for he whom I love I chastise. Since I wish to do a great work in thee, and through thee in souls, those must be purified beforehand in the fire of humiliation and sorrow so that, weighed down with thy own misery, thou mayest share in my sorrow for all sinners who, crushed beneath the burden of their sins, refuse My help in order that they might find relief. Oh, how My Heart yearns after them, poor fallen creatures. Take courage, My daughter. Soon I will come and raise thee up in My arms. Then thou wilt see the glory of God.”** What a glorious day the day of her death must have been!

Mildred’s life teaches us that, in the end, all that matters is that we have done the will of God. Whether a sister in an active order or a contemplative or a lady in exile, does not matter. What truly matters is that we have surrendered our lives completely to the Father’s will, with no exceptions. **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!”** Her work is now ours to protect and to bring to fruition. **Do not add, delete, or change anything in a message from heaven! It has God’s copyright and trademark! No man or woman can alter it!**

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67<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, September 26, 2023.  
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