

**My Child, Nothing is Accomplished Without Pain.  
Do You Still Wish to Suffer All Things  
to Give Me to Souls?**



**Prepare to Suffer Much!**

*If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake and for the gospel's sake will save it. For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes with the holy angels in the glory of his Father. (Mark 8:34 9:1.)*

O paradox, such seeming contradiction! In order to live, we must die! Suffering is simply part of our human condition since original sin. There is no escape from it. Nature teaches us well that new life cannot be born without the pains of labor. The grain cannot be tilled from our fields without the sweat of our brow. The seed cannot blossom unless it first dies in the ground. St. Paul reminds us there is no victory unless we endure the race, and we cannot become the adult until we cease to be the child. Servant of God Bishop Fulton J. Sheen would say one cannot be crowned unless one has first suffered. Jesus tells us if we wish to follow him, we must pick up our cross and climb the hill of Calvary to be nailed to our cross alongside Him, **good thieves in our own rite**, begging for His mercy from where He reigns in His kingdom.

**Nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much.** Our Blessed Lady spoke these words to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil on February 12, 1958.

**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. ... But my children will not heed; they will not listen. Every other way they will take, but not this one....O my small one, beloved of my Son's Heart, prepare yourself by prayer, penance, and suffering for what is to come....Behold, O my children, the tears of your Mother! Shall I weep in vain? Assuage the sorrow of my Heart over the ingratitude of sinful men by the love and chasteness of your lives. Will you do this for me, beloved children, or will you allow your Mother to weep in vain? I come to you, O children of America, as a last resort. I plead with you to listen to my voice....Be my faithful children as I have been your faithful Mother.



*Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil  
2 Aug 1916 - 10 Jan 2000*

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 23-24 and 12 respectively.)

The message of Our Lady of America® bleeds with a terrible sense of urgency as her words, dampened with the tears of a Mother pleading for her children, beg us to reform our lives and to come to her to hide and be protected beneath her mantle of mercy from God's perfect justice about to fall upon a sinful and ungrateful generation. Already in 1954 Our Lord told Sister that what is lacking most in the world today is FAITH and that many profess their belief but do not live it. **He exhorted Sister to sacrifice herself so faith might again enter our hearts.**

**Their hearts are cold, for without faith there can be no love. Pray and sacrifice yourself, My child, that faith may once again find entrance into the hearts of men. ... 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.** (Diary, Pg. 5.)

This **vocation to the altar of sacrifice** is echoed in St. Michael's words to Sister Mildred, also in 1954 prior to Our Lady's appearance, when he asked her, "**Will you accept the cross?**" In January of 1957 Our Lady exhorts Sister to prayer and penance again.

**My daughter, will my children in America listen to my pleadings and console my Immaculate Heart? Will my loyal sons carry out my desires and thus help me bring the peace of Christ once again to mankind? Pray and do penance, my sweet child, that this may come to pass. ...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. ... **What am I to do, child of my heart, when my children turn from me? ... 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, Pgs. 15-19.)

The Liturgy of Baptism reminds us that we are plunged into the mystery of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection, for He took the suffering that is part of our sinful human condition upon Himself in order to heal us. Suffering can be external--forced on us, like the loss of a job, injury from an accident, the trials of life, discrimination or any of the injustices society can inflict on us. Or, suffering can be internal--consequences of our own concupiscence, temptation and personal sin and their guilt and shame that can affect the health of our bodies, minds and souls. **Suffering can be chastisements or trials sent by a loving Father wishing to correct us for our own salvation and deeper conversion and growth in holiness as He draws us further away from sin and darkness and increasingly into His merciful Love and the light of His glory.** Whatever way suffering comes to us, it must be accepted and embraced if we are to imitate and unite with the Passion of our Savior and His redemptive mission for our salvation and the salvation of all mankind.

Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical, ***ON THE RIGHT ORDERING OF CHRISTIAN LIFE, EXEUNTE IAM ANNO***, #10, promulgated on December 25, 1888, addresses this challenge to every Christian.

**Now the whole essence of a Christian life is to reject the corruption of the world and to oppose constantly any indulgence in it; this is taught in the words and deeds, the laws and institutions, the life and death of Jesus Christ, "the author and finisher of faith." [5] Hence, however strongly we are deterred by the evil disposition of nature and character, it is our duty to run to the "fight proposed to us," [6] fortified and armed with the same desire and the same arms as He who, "having joy set before him, endured the cross." [7] Wherefore let men understand this specially, that it is most contrary to Christian duty to follow, in worldly fashion, pleasures of every kind, to be afraid of the hardships attending a virtuous life, and to deny nothing to self that soothes and delights the senses. "They that are Christ's, have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences" [8] -- so that it follows that they who are not accustomed to suffering, and who hold not ease and pleasure in contempt belong not to Christ. By the infinite goodness of God man lived again to the hope of an immortal life, from which he had been cut off, but he cannot attain to it if he strives not to walk in the very footsteps of Christ and conform his mind to Christ's by the meditation of Christ's example. Therefore this is not a counsel but a duty, and it is the duty, not of those only who desire a more perfect life, but clearly of every man "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus." [9] ...**

Our present culture would like to define life as a beach or an endless party and falsely sees God as some giant pill we can take to avoid all pain at all costs. Such a culture quickly becomes hedonistic, idolatrous and adulterous with self-worship and self-indulgence to the neglect of God and others. Do we not speak today of a culture of death rather than of life? No wonder Our Lord and Our Lady challenge us, especially here in America, to **prayer, penance and reform of life, *being in the world but not of it, rejecting its temporal and profane ways.*** On the feast of the Most Holy Rosary, October 7, 1957, Our Lady stated so clearly that we must purify ourselves or be purified!

**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 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.)

On December 20, 1959 Our Lady appeared again, warning and pleading:

**...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. ...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. Weep, then, dear child, weep with your Mother over the sins of men. Intercede with me before the throne of mercy, for sin is overwhelming the world and punishment is not far away.** (Diary, Pg. 34.)

In June of 1967 Our Lady came again saying our sins cry out to heaven for punishment for we still have not heeded her voice. In 1980 she pleaded still again, saying the time is so late and yet there is no one to further **the cause of renewal from within.** She speaks heaven's mandate to us in America.

**...It is the United States that is to lead the world to peace, the peace of Christ, the peace that He brought with Him from heaven in His birth as man in the little town of Bethlehem....unless the United States accepts and carries out faithfully the mandate given to it by heaven to lead the world to peace, there will come upon it and all nations a great havoc of war and incredible suffering.** (Diary, Pgs. 34-38.)

The message of Our Lady of America® is filled with that plea for renewal, for reform of life, and with exhortations from both Our Lord and Our Lady to Sister Mildred, and through her to all of us, to pray and do penance, not only for our own salvation but

also for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of others. Our Lady begs: **“Help me save those who will not save themselves.”** (Diary, Pg. 15.)

In his encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi, On the Mystical Body of Christ*, Pope Pius XII addresses this mystery of our communion in the living Body of Christ and the obligation it imposes on us to suffer with and for the other members of Christ’s Body even as Christ Himself has, and to bring into its grace those not already joined to Christ.

**This is a deep mystery, and an inexhaustible subject of meditation, that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penances which the members of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offer for this intention and on the cooperation of pastors of souls and of the faithful, especially of fathers and mothers of families, a cooperation which they must offer to our Divine Savior as though they were His associates. #44 ..... For that which our Lord began when hanging on the Cross, he continues unceasingly amid the joys of heaven: "Our Head," says St. Augustine, "intercedes for us: some members He is receiving, others He is chastising, others cleansing, others consoling, others creating, others calling, others recalling, others correcting, others renewing." But it is for us to cooperate with Christ in this work of salvation, "from one and through one saved and saviors." #59**

Many of our saints attest to the importance of our prayers and suffering for the salvation of souls. Saint Faustina records in her Diary, **Divine Mercy in My Soul**, how her guardian angel took her on a visit to hell so she might describe its horrors to us and attest to the truth of its existence and the impact it made on her to pray for sinners and plead God’s mercy on them. Jesus told her...

**“I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in my heart for souls and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My Mercy on behalf of sinners; desire their salvation. When you say this prayer with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion.” [The prayer.] “Oh Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You. Amen.”**

St. John Vianney had a special call to pray for sinners.

**I am only content when I’m praying for sinners. The good God has made me see how much he loves that I pray for poor sinners. ... I don’t know if it were really a voice I heard or a dream, but, whatever it was, it woke me up and told me that to save a soul in the state of sin is more pleasing to God than all sacrifices. For that reason, I do all my resolutions for penance.**

St. Paul of the Cross advises us that holiness is found in the Passion of Jesus.

**Here learn the science of the Saints: All is to be found in the passion of Jesus. Make every effort to remain hidden in the wounds of Jesus, and you will be enriched with every good and every true light, enabling you to fly to that Perfection which is consonant with your way of life. ... The passion of Jesus is a sea of sorrows, but it is also an ocean of love. Ask the Lord to teach you to fish in this ocean. Dive into its depths. No matter how deep you go, you will never reach the bottom.**

At Fatima the three shepherd children were also shown a vision of hell that terrified them. Our Lady told them that **hell is where so many poor souls go because there is no one to pray for them.** Thereafter they were unceasing in their prayers and penance for the conversion of sinners. Our Lady tells us we all know the sacrifices expected of us, particularly with the duties of our state in life, and that we must carry them out in love and trust in God's mercy, for God will never fail those who put their trust in Him and who do their part. Sister Mildred, **God's victim soul**, certainly did her part, suffering a great deal to bring this message to us and to give Christ to souls. Ponder the awesome encounter with Jesus she recounts in her August 6, 1956 letter to her spiritual director, Father Paul Leibold, in which Jesus tells her **He has placed her on the Altar of Sacrifice.** Note Jesus' inviting smile, so respectful of her freedom, as He comes with His cross and His crown of thorns and asks her to ***permit herself to be nailed to the cross.***

**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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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.**

Those who knew Sister well are convinced she bore the interior stigmata in her body in likeness to the Sacred Wounds in the Sacred Humanity of the Bridegroom of her soul. We may never be called to share an inkling of such victimhood with Jesus, but, to some degree, through Baptism, we must enter into that mystery and live and die with the One Who was both Priest and Victim for us all.

The Claretian Fathers offer these wise words called "Your Cross."

**The everlasting God has in His wisdom foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost Heart. This cross He now sends you He has considered with His all-knowing eyes,**

understood with His Divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighted with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His holy Name, anointed it with His grace, perfumed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all-merciful love of God.

Servant of God Bishop Fulton J. Sheen gives us equally ponderous words on Christ's sufferings.

What He has done with His human nature, we must do with ours—plant it in the soil of the cross and await the Resurrection of the Eternal Easter.... The cross is the condition; we must be nailed to it. Our Lord loved His Cross so much that He keeps its scars even in His glory. He who had won victory over death, kept the record of its wounds. If so precious to Him, they cannot be meaningless for us. In their preservation is the reminder that we too must be signed with those signs and sealed with those seals. On Judgment Day He will say to each of us: “Show Me your hands and feet. Where are your scars of victory?” ... But woe to us who come down from the Calvary of this earthly pilgrimage with hands unscarred and white!

(Fulton J. Sheen, THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS, Alba House/St. Pauls, Pgs. 69-70.)

**When Jesus asks us, “Will you accept my cross and my crown of thorns?”  
or “Are you willing to suffer to give me to souls?”**

**How do **we** answer Him?**

**When He asks us to show Him our hands and our feet,  
will **we** have any scars to show Him?**

**Copyright © Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity,  
Fostoria, Ohio, February, 2012.**

**All rights reserved.**