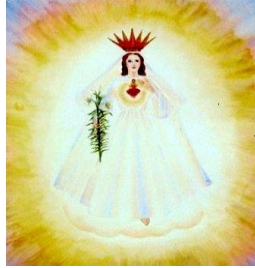


## September 26, 1956 - Sixty-three Years Ago Recounting the Events of That Day



The next morning, the feast of the North American Martyrs, Mass had just been concluded and the Community thanksgiving was almost over. There were a few minutes left when suddenly Our Lady appeared before me, enveloped in a soft glow of light. I knew with unmistakable certainty that it was she, though she did not speak immediately. What I noticed was the smile on Our Lady's beautiful countenance and the lily she held in her right hand. She wore a white veil reaching almost to the waist and a mantle and robe of pure white with not a single decoration of any kind. An oblong-shaped clasp or brooch held the ends of the mantle together at the top. It was all gold, as was the high and brilliant crown which she wore. Her hair and her eyes seemed of medium brown. Her feet were bare, but these I did not always see, as they were sometimes covered by the moving clouds on which Our Lady stood. She continued to smile. Then I saw her heart appear, encircled with red roses, the symbol of suffering as it was revealed to me, and sending forth flames of fire. With her left hand Our Lady seemed to be holding up slightly the upper part of her mantle, so that her Immaculate Heart could be seen.

Then solemnly and distinctly, in calm yet majestic tones, I heard these words: "I am Our Lady of America. I desire that my children honor me, especially by the purity of their lives."

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Lodi, OH, Pg.10.)

How many times we must have read this passage on the appearance of Our Lady under this new image of Our Lady of America, but have we imprinted it deeply in our minds and our hearts? Everything about the image speaks of purity: the lily and its whiteness, the light soft but so bright it almost dissipates the outline of Our Lady's form. It reminds us of the *shekinah glory*, the brilliant light that hovered over the Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament as the sign of God's Presence in their midst. Is not Mary the Ark of the New Covenant bearing, not just the gifts of God but God Himself, to all humankind? The green stem speaks of hope and life and fruitfulness. Mary's heart encircled with red roses, symbol of suffering, also a symbol of love, sends forth flames of fire, flames of the Divine Love that dwells within her and is poured forth upon humankind. The medium brown color of her eyes and hair would be common to a young American girl; she comes to us as one of us. The beautiful smile speaks of a Mother's love for her children. The simplicity of her appearance, without decoration on her garments, speaks to her humility and simplicity which she asks us to imitate in the purity of our own lives. The gold of the brooch and the crown, which Sister Mildred later said had twelve points, speaks of her queenship over our land, every land, and to imagery of the New Jerusalem

in the Book of Revelation, the City of God with twelve gates named for the twelve tribes of Israel and with walls having twelve foundations named for the 12 apostles, and to the woman clothed with the sun and with the moon at her feet, image of the Church and of Mary, who escape the clutches of the dragon. No wonder Sister Mildred would later be inspired to write the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception with these words; **“O Immaculate Mother, Queen of our Country, ...reign over us, O heavenly Lady, so pure and so bright with the radiance of God’s light shining in and about you.”** (The Diary, Pg. 47.) It is no surprise that Our Lady would later appear under another new image, **the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God**, standing on a globe, her right foot on a crescent moon and her left on the snout of an ugly dragon. **“I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within.”**

When Sister left the chapel that day to perform her daily duties, Our Lady followed and remained with her. As she hurried about her tasks, unable to give attention to Our Lady, Sister would direct a glance of love toward her every so often. Our Lady simply stood and smiled back with that sweet smile of a loving Mother. Sister was conscious of Our Lady’s presence in a way distinctly new to her that day. Later, toward the end of the evening Holy Hour, the Immaculate Virgin spoke these words:

**My child, I entrust you with this message that you must make known to my children in America. I wish it to be the country dedicated to my purity. The wonders I will work will be the wonders of the soul. They must have faith and believe firmly in my love for them. I desire that they be the children of my Pure Heart. I desire, through my children of America, to further the cause of faith and purity among peoples and nations. Let them come to me with confidence and simplicity, and I, their Mother, will teach them to become pure like to my Heart that their own hearts may be more pleasing to the Heart of my Son.”** (The Diary, Pg. 11.)

Here is the mission to America, to be **the** country dedicated to Mary’s purity and to assist Our Lady in the **renewal of faith and purity among all peoples and nations**. Our Lady calls for a reform of life, sanctification from within, a purity of heart that mirrors her own and will bind us closer to the Heart of her Son. Sister said that Our Lady called herself Our Lady of America **“as a sign of her pleasure at the confidence our land places in her and as a reward for its staunch and childlike devotion to her.”** While Our Lady came in this manner as a special token to her children in America, she welcomes her children of all nations to her feet where they may find true peace. On this day Our Lady also emphasized her wish that the Shrine in Washington, D.C. be made a place of special pilgrimage and that she be honored there as **“Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin.®”** (The Diary, Pg. 12.) Sister saw Our Lady frequently after this date and Our Lady seemed anxious to impress her **with the truth and importance of her appearance**.

The evening before Our Lady had appeared to Sister Mildred under the image of Our Lady of Lourdes where she had revealed herself as “I am the Immaculate Conception,” the singular privilege by which the United States honors Mary as our Patroness. At that time Our Lady promised **“that greater miracles than those granted at Lourdes and Fatima would be granted here in America, the United States in particular, if we would do as she desires.”** (The Diary, Pg. 9.) Does Our Lady mean “greater” in number,

or greater in kind? Our Lady expressed her pleasure in the honor and devotion her children in America give her, especially through her glorious and unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception, and she promised to reward that love. **“I do not promise miracles of the body, but of the soul.”** (The Diary, Pg. 10.) Our Lady was anxiously concerned for our inner lives and went on to say, **“it is mainly through these miracles of grace that the Holy Trinity is glorified among men and nations.”** (The Diary, Pg. 10.) She asked that America continue to grow in its love for her and she will work wonders in her. Miracles of grace Our Lady calls them. The kind that will glorify the Holy Trinity among men and nations!

After two glorious days full of love, reward, promise and hope, Our Lady appears the very next day, September 27, 1956, holding the world in her hands while her tears flow over it as if to cleanse it from its guilt. Why is she weeping?

**“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. Cleanse your souls in the Precious Blood of My Son. Live in His Heart, and take me in that I may teach you to live in great purity of heart which is so pleasing to God. Be my army of chaste soldiers, ready to fight to the death to preserve the purity of your souls. I am the Immaculate One, Patroness of your land. Be my faithful children as I have been your faithful Mother.**

**These are my words, O my daughter. Make them known to my children. I desire to make the whole of America my shrine by making every heart accessible to the love of my Son.”** (The Diary, Pg. 12.)

Our Lady has given America a mission to lead the world in spiritual renewal and a return to Faith and Purity. She said she comes to America as a last resort. A last resort? In a letter to her spiritual director, Sister Mildred records similar words from Our Lady.

**“I am indeed the Mother of Sorrows and it is my children who pierce my heart. Their lives are filled with vanity and selfishness. They love my Son with their lips but not in their hearts. They refuse to follow me and my Son along the way of the Cross, because they have no love. Love gives, love does not count the cost. But for most souls, love asks too much. They are willing to receive in abundance, but they will not give. A full heart cannot receive love. It must first be emptied. It must give all, then it will receive all. O my children, give me your hearts, emptied of all self-seeking and sinful pleasures, and I will fill it with Divine Love. I will give you Jesus, to hold in your hearts.”** (our emphasis)

**“At the foot of the Cross, my sweet child, through the greatest pain and suffering, I obtained for you and all mankind, in union with my dying Son, all the graces necessary for your salvation and sanctification. Think of this, my little one, and do not forget the sorrows of your Mother.”** (Sister’s letter dated March 6, 1957.)

Who can ignore the tears of such a Mother? Or the promises she has made to us?

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63<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of this Apparition.  
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