

## The 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Death of Sister Mildred Neuzil

### *God's Choice of a Messenger for Our Times*

#### *"They Do Not Believe You Because You Are a Small One"*

**Consider your own calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God.**

(New American Bible, I Corinthians 1:26-30)

January 10, 2014, is the 14<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Sister Mildred Neuzil, God's chosen soul to bring us the message of Our Lady of America® with its mandate to the **United States of America to be The Nation dedicated to her purity, a purity that goes beyond purity of body to a purity of heart and mind and soul.** Our Lady has given America the mission to lead the world to peace through an understanding of the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity in every person through the sanctifying grace Christ won for us with His Passion, Death and Resurrection. Our Lord and Our Lady called for the renewal of the family, a discernment of the spirits to confront the many lies of Satan that have overtaken so much of our society, and even of our Church, and exhorted priests to be spiritual leaders and models of self-denial, poverty and poverty of spirit and to teach reverence for the Eucharist. St. Joseph calls on fathers to take once again their rightful place in the family and has modeled for us that humble and obedient faith to the will of God and to the laws of our religion, Christ's Church. Jesus warned of unnatural acts done in the name of love, and of false teachers and false messiahs, for He alone is the One sent by God Who has come down from heaven, pre-announced from ancient times, the only Savior of the world. The message of Our Lady calls for purification, a reform of life, a return to the interior life, as the necessary preparation for the enthronement of her statue under this new image of Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin® in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., after being carried in solemn procession. This is the patronal church of the American people and the only shrine that is the entire focus of this message according to Our Lady's own words.

So who is this chosen soul? What attracted Jesus so much to her that Our Lady told Sister Mildred that **"my Son is in love with your lowliness."** What does her life tell us about understanding and living this message, if not that the virtue of great humility is necessary for God to work His miracles of grace in our souls. God has a bias for the poor and the powerless, the anawim. We must understand how God works in the little ones in order to discern the evil spirits that prey upon those puffed with pride in their attempt to hinder God's work here on earth.

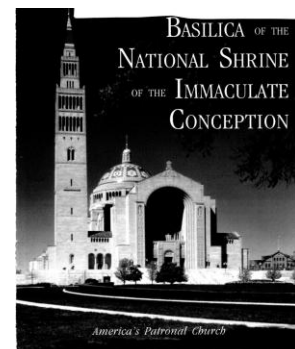
Historically, Mildred Neuzil was born in Brooklyn, NY, on August 2, 1916, near the close of World War I and the Fatima apparitions, to Austrian parents, John and Anna

(Smerda) Neuzil. She was baptized, fittingly, at Most Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn before moving to Our Lady of Good Counsel parish in Cleveland, Ohio. On September 12, 1930, at age 14, she entered the active order of the Sisters of the Precious Blood in Dayton, Ohio. On August 15, 1933, at age 17, she made her first vows as a professed religious and received the name of Sister Mary Ephrem. **There are no accidents with God; everything is ordained to His purpose.** Sister Mildred began her religious service in Washington, D.C. where her mission from heaven would center its devotion. From there Sister was sent to Cincinnati, Ohio, where God ordained a holy, humble priest, Father Paul Leibold, later a bishop and archbishop, to be her spiritual director for this cause for 32 years until his sudden death in 1972. Already in 1938, before her final vows, Sister Mildred was having mystical experiences and locutions with Jesus which included special espousal with Him and an understanding that her mission was to converge on the sanctification of the family. On August 15, 1939, she made her final vows.

In the fall of 1956 Sister Mildred was sent briefly to Kneipp Springs, Rome City, Indiana, a place that gave her great forboding. She described feeling like she was in **“a ring of evil”**. There she encountered Satan who caused her great pain in an attempt to get her to abandon her mission. Happily, Our Lady appeared on September 25, 1956, first as Our Lady of Lourdes where she had identified herself as the Immaculate Conception, the title by which we honor her as our patroness. The following day Our Lady appeared under the new image we know as Our Lady of America® and began to unfold her message and the mission to America, the United States of America, not exclusively but in particular.

**“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.”** (Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, Page 11).

The following day Our Lady came holding a replica of the world in her hands as she wept over it. Later St. Joseph would appear to speak on the role of fathers in the family, obedience to the Church, and the Secret of Secrets--the Divine Indwelling of the Trinity in the soul. On October 5, 1956, Our Lady inspired Sister Mildred to write the words of the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception. On October 13, the same year, Our Lady appeared holding a replica of the finished National Shrine though, in reality, only the lower church was completed. She promised:





**“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. I will bless all those who, either by prayers, labor, or material aid, help to erect this shrine.”** (Diary, Pg. 14 ).

In November of 1956 Sister Mildred was asked by Our Lady to sketch her image as she appeared and as she desired to be promoted and enshrined in our National Basilica.

On July 1, 1957, Sister Mary Florecita Bidart was granted permission to establish a Benedictine cloister within the active group of the Precious Blood Sisters at the Our Lady of Nativity Convent in New Riegel, Ohio, a papal enclosure with its own rule apart from the active group and directly under Rome. In May, 1958, upon advice of Bishop Leibold, Sister Mildred entered the cloister. In November of 1959, the National Shrine was completed and dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Then, on May 1, 1961, Bishop Leibold put his imprimatur on Sister’s sketch of the medal drawn according to Our Lady’s specifications, and on May 22, 1962, Bishop George J. Rehring of the Toledo diocese, the diocese of authority over this message, approved distribution of the medals along with the mandate that the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity must be taught so that the message would be understood. On January 25, 1963, Daniel Pilarczyk, S.T.D. of Cincinnati put the Nihil Obstat on the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity and Bishop Leibold granted it the imprimatur. These actions, along with plaques of the image, according to church authorities, constituted the first and second stage of official Church approval. Although Archbishop Leibold personally approved of the devotion, as stated in his letters, and assisted Sister Mildred, contrary to misinformation in the public that tried to circumvent proper authority and proper procedure, he did not issue full canonical approval which requires a formal letter of official Church approval. Why? First, he never overstepped proper authority which he always deferred to the Toledo diocese even though he was in Cincinnati, the archdiocese. Secondly, as Father Francis Lammeier, Archbishop Leibold’s personal secretary, stated, Archbishop Leibold died before he could do so even if he had wanted to give official approval. And thirdly, the messages were incomplete when the archbishop died suddenly on June 1, 1972; Our Lady continued to give Sister Mildred messages concerning needed reforms for the whole Church into the 1980’s. Therefore, it was impossible for Archbishop Paul F. Leibold to grant full canonical approval on these apparitions and its message.

Due to conflict between the increasingly liberal active order and the strict Benedictine cloister over their separate rule of life, the cloistered group was advised by numerous religious who studied their rule, to separate from the active group in order to preserve their contemplative way of life. In December of 1977 they informed the Precious Blood superior of their intent. Shortly thereafter officials from Precious Blood came to the cloister and ordered Sister Florecita and Sister Joseph Therese, two of the seven sisters, to

leave the monastery the next morning, but the cloistered sisters were informed by officials in Rome that the Precious Blood had no authority to do such a thing. The seven contemplative sisters proceeded then to request complete separation from the Precious Blood group and sent that request to Pope Paul VI on February 9, 1978, and also requested to retain their vows. They sought exclaustation from the Precious Blood, a canonical procedure wherein they lose any active participation in the Precious Blood group, which is still responsible for their care until they are reorganized. Four of the sisters could not endure the immense sufferings that followed and left the group. On April 3, 1979 the foundress, Sister Florecita, passed away due to a massive heart attack, leaving Sister Mildred and Sister Joseph Therese to carry on. On December 31, 1979, the Precious Blood sold the Our Lady of Nativity Convent that housed the cloister and thus displaced the two remaining sisters, refusing any further exclaustation benefit and forcing them out while taking from them the printing press Sister Florecita had procured for their livelihood, as well as a piece of property a priest had given the cloister for a future convent. A relative of Archbishop Leibold then gave the two sisters a home to live in. Thus they were abandoned by those whom they had served for so many years and by the local church officials who had promised help to reorganize, then rescinded to avoid conflict with the active group and any loss to their own positions. How like Jesus, abandoned by His own!. It was expedient to let these two fall into the cracks for the sake of the many to prosper rather than risk any loss to themselves if they helped them. Hence, the message was ignored, as were the sisters.

Sister Mildred was given her place of rest but not from suffering. Like other sisters in rare cases in the history of the Church, these two faithful souls were forced to live apart from a community in private vow, members of the lay faithful until such time when they might form a new order. It seems forces were at work to prevent that from ever happening. Little did Sister Mildred or Sister Joseph Therese know what would be asked of them in this configuration to Christ's Passion, knowing false accusations and abandonment like He had endured, but they chose to do God's will and trust Him to care for them and to bring this work to fruition, for it is His work, not theirs; they have been its guardians until He decides we are purified enough to receive it.

What is so special about these two sisters bound together by association in this great mission for the Church and the world and for America? It is their utter simplicity and lowliness, their humility and surrender to God's will in a situation that left them no due representation in the Church and no support, save for a few kind souls who knew them and discerned the truth. **Sister Mildred and Sister Joseph Therese**, who inherited Sister's copyrights and trademarks on the Diary and devotionals associated with this message and who was mandated by Sister Mildred to protect the integrity of the message with her life, **shared the same fate**. They give us a great lesson about spiritual riches, about humility and simplicity, surrender and trust and endurance. They are God's little ones so often oppressed by the powerful but so dearly loved by Him. Let us heed both Our Lady's and Our Lord's words in this regard.

**“Beloved daughter, you are not being accepted because you are a small one. But in the end all will come as I desire. Those who oppose you will receive light to understand.” (Diary, Pg. 37, August 14, 1980).**

**Pride must be the great sin of our times, or at least one of the great ones, for Our Lord speaks so often about humility. ... [Sister Mildred relates Christ’s words when He calls her His little white dove.] “My Heart speaks to the humble. It is they who hear My Voice. Be humble My children, be humble and pure of heart. Then will I come and dwell with you. My little white dove, how humility and simplicity are despised by the proud of this world. Oh what a loss they suffer. For despising the humble Christ will judge them.” (Letter to Father Leibold).**

**[In a 1954 letter to Father Leibold, Sister relates Christ’s words for both of them:] “I seek always the humble and lowly of heart and since I have found two such, so I have entrusted to them a great mission, but become not vain, for I have chosen him and you only because of your unworthiness and lack of virtue. Let this thought be with you always, that you may remember that it is I working through you, Who sanctify you for His glory and the salvation of souls. You are poor instruments in My Hands, but through you a Great Work will be accomplished. I am the Great Sculptor of souls. With hammer and chisel I form them that they may glorify My Father by their beauty and perfection. Be pliant in My Hands, oh My two lowly ones, My chosen priest and My little white dove, and then will you be formed into My likeness and through you I will be formed in souls.”**

**[In a 1957 letter Sister records Our Lady’s words:] “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. ...God has no need of anyone, yet He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory. Sweet child, let your humble heart be filled with a 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.”**

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that God works His wonders!”**

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