

September's Marian Feasts and "Our Lady of America®"

Part I – The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On September 8th we celebrated the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, followed by the feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary on September 12. On September the 15th, the day after the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, we honored Our Lady of Sorrows, and on September 24th, we honor Our Lady of Ransom, also known as Our Lady of Mercy. These feasts are most significant in showing Our Lady's essential role as Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of grace in God's plan of salvation, as is so evident in the message of "Our Lady of America®."

The nativity of Mary was first celebrated in the Eternal Mind of God Who fashioned her with all the splendor of heaven to be a fitting dwelling place on earth for a loving God Who wished to incarnate Himself into our human history. That design was the Immaculate Conception by which we honor Mary as our Patroness and by which, as "Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin," she wishes to be enthroned in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC. This double birth, that of the Sacred Humanity and that of the Mother of the Sacred Humanity, was foretold to Adam and Eve after their sin in the Garden of Eden when God promised there would come a new Adam and a new Eve to undo their disobedience and their pride and its punishment on all their posterity. In that promise of a Savior was also a curse upon Satan who had seduced them into their sin. That promise in the Garden was as much about Mary as it was about Jesus. Here begins the rich theological and Scriptural theme of "*The Woman*" recorded in Genesis, prefigured in various symbols and prototypes throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, and fulfilled in the book of Revelations where the symbolism of the Woman clothed with the sun, first understood to be Israel who brought forth our Savior, and then the New Israel, Christ's church, always under the evil attack of the dragon, was later applied to Mary. Here, too, begins the ancient battle between Satan and the Holy Triune God against whom he revolted.

Bishop Fulton J. Sheen often said in his teachings that some theologians believe the angels, because of the brilliance of their minds, could see into the future and saw the Incarnate God in Christ, and looking at their own marvelous glory, refused to adore a God who would condescend so low as to assume a human nature so utterly beneath His nature and their own. No wonder Satan wages endless war upon that Sacred Humanity and that Woman, the Immaculate Virgin and Mother who gave us that Sacred Humanity, she whose rise above these proud and jealous angels in the order of grace must have thoroughly enraged them. Considering that from the time of that Promise the fallen angels knew with certainty that they were doomed to be crushed by that

Woman and her Seed, and considering Our Lady of America told Sr. Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil that it would be the Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in every soul that would crush and destroy Lucifer forever, it is no surprise that this devotion that centers on the Divine Indwelling of the Holy Trinity has come under such huge, demonic attack! But God always has the last word!

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel. (Gen 3:15)

This promise in Eden is the Protogospel, the “first good news,” the first and most important prophecy regarding God’s plan for our salvation. By God’s choice, the Woman and her Seed cannot be separated. Without Mary there is no Sacred Humanity and without the Sacred Humanity and her Divine Motherhood, Mary is just another woman and not the “solitary boast” of our human nature, a class completely unto herself. ***The nativity of Mary is truly the beginning of our salvation.*** Generally saints are not honored for their birth on earth but for their birth into heaven. There are two exceptions-- the Nativity of Mary and the Nativity of John the Baptist.

Some say March 19th, the day we honor St. Joseph as the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of the Universal Church, was actually his birth date, but the feast does not honor his nativity per se. It is generally accepted that the greater the saint, the greater the honor. St. Joseph is clearly greater than the Baptist because his role as legal father and guardian of the Messiah is greater than John’s role as precursor announcing the arrival of the Messiah. In Matthew 11:11 we read, ***“Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”*** John is the greatest of the prophets of the Old Testament as he brings it to a close and announces that the kingdom of God is at hand, but Mary and Joseph and Jesus inaugurate the New Covenant and the Kingdom of God in the hypostatic order of grace. Thus Mary and Joseph both exceed the Baptist in closeness to God and are therefore greater. In the message of “Our Lady of America®” Joseph tells us he was cleansed from original sin the moment after his conception in the womb of his mother, while John was already six months in Elizabeth’s womb when he was cleansed at the greeting of Mary. Hence, it is certainly rational to support the view that Joseph’s nativity ought to be celebrated, too.

There are many symbols and women in the Hebrew Scriptures who prefigure Mary in her role as Mother of the Sacred Humanity, Co-redemptrix and Mediatrix of grace. She is seen as the ladder in Jacob’s vision bringing God to earth and earth to God in the Divine Humanity. She is likened to the burning but unconsumed bush of Moses, made fruitful in motherhood by the fire of the Spirit while remaining intact as a virgin. She is the garden enclosed, the perpetual virgin. She is truly the Ark of the Covenant, God’s dwelling place with man, made not of wood but of her own flesh, bearing in her

womb the Divine Presence and the Bread of Life Himself. She is the dawn that announces the rising Sun of Justice. She is the pure white dove carrying into our world the olive branch that is the very Prince of Peace and Lord of lords Himself. Like Sarah, who gave birth to Isaac, son of the promise, she, too, gave birth to Jesus, the Promise fulfilled. Like Esther who interceded with the king for the salvation of her people, so Mary intercedes with her King-Son for our salvation. Like Judith who cut off the head of Holofernes and saved her people from their enemy, so Mary will crush the head of the ancient serpent and bring us final victory over our infernal enemy. Like Rachel, mother of Joseph who saved his people from starvation in the desert, so Mary is Mother of Jesus Who saves His people from spiritual starvation in the desert of sin.

In the message of “Our Lady of America®”, Our Lady states this stupendous role God has given to her on behalf of all mankind.

I am the Mother of the Sacred Humanity, and it is my special work as co-redemptrix of the human race to help souls reach the sanctity of the Father in eternal union by showing them how to put on Christ, to imbibe His Spirit, and thus become one with Him.

(Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, Diary, “Our Lady of America®,” Fostoria, Ohio, Pg. 24)

In her private revelations Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich addresses the unfolding of God’s ancient promise concerning Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix throughout the generations of holy men and women. She identifies the Essenes as ancestors of Mary, praying in the Cave of Elias on Mount Horeb in anticipation of the birth of the Mother of the Messiah, whom they understood would be a Virgin, whose birth would be the first sign that Redemption was nigh. Blessed Ann Catherine recounts how that cave, with a closed up chapel honoring the Mother of the Messiah, was found by a holy monk about 250 years after the death of Mary. In the cave were hidden relics and bones of many of the holy prophets who had prayed and waited for the birth of this Virgin-Mother. Isaiah had likewise prophesied that the mother of the Messiah would be a virgin. Blessed Ann Catherine claims these monks were the first to celebrate the feast of Mary’s Nativity after the discovery of that cave and from there the feast slowly spread throughout the Christian world and into the Western Church.

(Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Templegate, Springfield, Illinois, 1934, pgs. 83-84)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.

Although private revelations are not obligatory to our Faith, the following of Ann Catherine’s visions on the utter significance of Mary’s birth to God’s magnificent plan of salvation is too awesome not to share for personal reflection.

In the moment of Mary's birth I saw the tidings brought to the patriarchs in limbo. I saw them all, especially Adam and Eve, filled with inexpressible joy at the fulfillment of the promise given in Paradise. I also perceived that the patriarchs advanced in their state of grace, that the place of their sojourn became brighter and more spacious, and that it was given to them to have more influence on earth. It was as if all their labour and penance, all the struggling, crying and yearning of their lives had matured into its destined fruit.

(Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, pg. 77)

The Woman of Grace! A virgin! A Mother! Ann Catherine goes on to say:

At the moment when the new-born child lay in the arms of her holy mother Anna, I saw that at the same time the child was presented in heaven in the sight of the Most Holy Trinity, and was greeted with unspeakable joy by all the heavenly host. Then I understood, that there was made known to her in a supernatural manner, her whole future with all her joys and sorrows. Mary was taught infinite mysteries, and yet was and remained a child. ...As the vision faded in which I saw the child Mary being thus taught in heaven through grace, I heard her weep for the first time.

(Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, pg. 77)

Anne Catherine tells of two beautiful practices given by Our Lady to celebrate her birthday. The first, for pregnant women, is to celebrate the vigil of her birth with prayer and fasting and nine Ave Marias in honor of her nine months in Anna's womb. If they repeat this practice during pregnancy and receive Communion the day before their confinement, she would bring their prayer to God and intercede for a safe delivery. The other was for anyone who would recite nine Ave Marias on the afternoon of her birthday in honor of her sojourn in Anna's womb and continue the practice for nine days. Nine flowers each day would be presented to the angels for a bouquet they would then present to the Holy Trinity to obtain favor for the suppliant. A beautiful practice indeed.

(Emmerich, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, pg. 85)

Before Mary was born in time, however, Satan already hated her in anticipation of her victory over him, for she is the Woman of that Promise revealed in Genesis; the Virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, whom the angel Gabriel greeted, "Hail Mary, full of grace; the Woman who gives birth to the Savior in Bethlehem, House of Bread; the Woman who calls forth the salvific Mission of Jesus at Cana; the Woman who is the first disciple in faith, more blessed for hearing the Word of God and keeping it than for suckling the Savior at her breasts; the Woman to whom Jesus entrusts His beloved disciple John and, in him, all of us as she stands at the foot of the Cross as co-redeemer and Mediatrix of grace, utterly united with the One Mediator of redemption before the throne of God; the Woman clothed with the Sun, with the moon at her feet in Revelations, swept away before the dragon could touch her. She is the pledge of God's

victory and Satan's demise. Her very existence, eternal and historical, roars out like thunder through every age, announcing his defeat. She is the one Woman over whom Satan never has had nor will have any power. This is our Mother, our Patroness!

My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, Diary, Pg.18)

This intimate communion of Mary's grace with Jesus' redemptive mission is as powerful in our personal lives as it is in salvation history. In Mary's own words we hear:

It is the wish of my Son that fathers and mothers strive to imitate me and my chaste spouse in our holy life in Nazareth. We practiced the simple virtues of family life, Jesus our Son being the center of all our love and activity. The Holy Trinity dwelt with us in a manner far surpassing anything that can ever be imagined. For ours was the earthly paradise where once again God walked among men. As in our little home no sin was to be found, so it is the wish of the Heart of my Son and my Immaculate Heart that sin should, as far as possible, be unheard of in the homes of our children.

The Divine Trinity will dwell in your midst only if you are faithful in practicing the virtues of our life at Nazareth. Then, you also, my children, you also will become another paradise. God will then walk among you and you will have peace.

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, Diary, pg.8)

We can't help but see the parallel of this family to that first family in the Garden of Eden. That first family lost paradise for us; this Holy Family gives us the way to regain it. The way is that of the Divine Indwelling of the Triune God in every home and every soul. It is no wonder Satan is attacking the institution of the traditional family and traditional marriage which mirror so profoundly this Holy Family in today's society, and reflects the inner family life of the Most Holy Trinity itself.

What envy these evil spirits must feel for those humble human creatures who gain what they themselves have lost through their sin of pride. What rage they must feel for that Woman, Mary, and her spouse, Joseph, mere human creatures so utterly beneath the angels in the order of nature, who transcend them so magnificently in glory in the order of grace because of their unimaginable intimacy with the Sacred Humanity in the work of redemption. The closer one is to God, the greater one is. As previously stated, there are no creatures closer to God than Mary and Joseph who form the hypostatic order of grace; they are higher than and command the angels in this order of grace. Mary's true greatness is in having born God within her body and soul and having given Jesus her very flesh for His Sacred Humanity! Oh what terrible vengeance these evil ones wrought on that Sacred Humanity in His Passion and Death. What persecution and horror they continue to wreak upon Christ's living Body, His Church, in

their futile attempt to destroy It as it stands as a bastion against their hellish empire.
“But the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

“Our Lady of America®, the Immaculate Conception, our Patroness, whose birth is celebrated in time and eternity, renews the Promise of Eden for all time. The Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity is our final victory over Satan, forever, as she states so clearly to Sister Mildred! It is the triumph of her Pure and Immaculate Heart!

From the beginning of time every prophecy, every vision, throughout the centuries, will have its fulfillment in Our Lady of America and her message of the Indwelling Trinity living in every soul, which will renew the whole world and destroy Lucifer and all the evil spirits in the fight he is making against the Indwelling Trinity. This will eventually destroy him.

(Our Lady’s conversation with Sister Mildred as told to and recorded by Mary Ziegman, August 30, 1995.)

To impress upon Sister Mildred how all encompassing is this grace of the Divine Indwelling and how terrible is Lucifer’s hatred for the Trinity, *and for her, Sister Mildred*, because of this message, Mary confides:

Have confidence. Just have patience. I know you are suffering a lot. Just trust me and soon you will see the wonders that I am performing, because of my Son and because of the Trinity, (which) will be done throughout the whole world. The young people will be spreading it all over and it will become a new world. This is why the evil spirit Lucifer hates you so. He will do everything he can to stop it (the message of the Indwelling of the Trinity), to make you suffer so that you will lose confidence. But don’t ever lose it. Trust me. It will not last forever. I am depending on you and your confidence in me. (Same conversation noted above.)

Now let us go to our Mother, the Woman at the center of our history and our destiny, and learn the secret of the interior life, intimacy with the Triune Love whose Heart beat so close to hers and Who wants nothing more than to have it beat close to ours. Who could know that Heart better than she? Let us ask her to share with us her fullness of grace so we might come to know the divine mysteries with some of the clarity and splendor with which she knew them. Let us love our dear Mother, for she loves us so! Let us ponder the words of Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem Neuzil, the daughter Mary taught so well and favored so with *this secret*:

To live in the Holy Trinity, oh that is life, life as God willed it to be and desires it to be; yet, in how many souls is His work frustrated, His great designs made void. I will not be as those ungrateful ones who forget the true Holy Treasure within them. I will remember that the great God Who created me out of nothing is

within me who, without Him, would return again into the nothingness out of which I was formed.

O Life, O Beatitude, O Heaven, You only delight of the soul, You who reach down from Your high celestial throne to gather unto Yourself the little ones of this earth and in recompense for the slight sufferings they bear out of love for You, give them Yourself. Look down, I beseech You, upon this, the smallest of Your small ones and have compassion on my extreme weakness and frailty, known even more to You than to myself, and make me entirely Yours.

**To live in the Holy Trinity,
oh that is life, life as God willed it to be!**

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