



For This Was He Born...

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

...For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:1-7)

In this image our eyes go immediately to the star shining in the dark of night, a light to which Joseph points and which directs our gaze to the Mother and Child. Shepherds in their fields would see this star as angels announce “this day a Savior is born for you in Bethlehem.” Wise men from the East would follow this star, seeking the newborn King so they might honor Him. The physical surroundings here would disgust any earthly king, but the glory surrounding these three persons, **this earthly trinity**, makes this stable God’s paradise on earth. St. Joseph’s left hand, raised to the heavens, confirms his surrender to the Divine Will, his consent to be Virgin-Father of God’s own Son and Virgin-Spouse of Mary, Mother of God, the guardian of God’s two most precious treasures. His right hand leads us straight to Jesus and Mary. Obedient to the angel, he would give Mary’s Child the name of “Jesus,” which means Savior. That act of naming made him a true father to Jesus by way of ritual and legal adoption. In the Jewish tradition, to name is to own, to be responsible for. In this image we see the two great mysteries of our Catholic Faith, the Incarnation of the God-man, so obvious, and the more hidden mystery of our Redemption, for the little lambs prefigure the Lamb of God who would be sacrificed to atone for our sins and make us “at one” with God again. In that stable is fleshed the Hypostatic Order of Grace-- the union of both divine and human natures in the one divine person of Jesus, and the union of the parents of Jesus, the two closest human beings to Him, in a most intimate and necessary co-operation and collaboration with the Redeemer in God’s plan for our salvation and the restoration of the human family in accordance with His design for it. This earthly trinity is a divinely ordained and irrepeatable image of the Heavenly Trinity Itself.

With the sins of the fallen angels and of Adam and Eve, all creation was plunged into an abyss of darkness, but here in Bethlehem God fulfilled His promise to Adam and Eve to send a Savior who would pay the debt of sin, wash us clean, and fill us with a new life greater than before, a supernatural life, a share in His own divinity. This Redeemer would lead us out of the darkness and slavery to sin and into the Light and freedom of Christ, the sanctifying grace of baptism into God’s family by way of adoption through the

Holy Spirit. No longer would we be mere natural creatures; we are henceforth divinized, sons and daughters of God! Bethlehem is the beginning of our salvation!

What is it that Joseph holds in his right hand? Could it be a flame of love? Or an oil lamp shedding light upon the mystery taking place there? Or a vessel burning incense to acknowledge the Eternal High Priest who has come to earth to offer Himself as a both priest and victim upon our altars of sacrifice? And the little lambs? How they must bleat their pity for this Child, the unblemished Lamb of God, who would be slain for the forgiveness of our sins.

Themes of light and darkness abound in Sacred Scripture which knows God as the Author of Light and the dispeller of darkness. During His mission on earth, Jesus would declare Himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, the Light of the world that cannot be put out. Light is a universal and fundamental symbol referencing things spiritual and divine, illumination and intelligence, the source of goodness and ultimate reality, that which transcends nature with the supernatural.

“God is light, man is darkness, and unless he comes into the light, he will be forever darkness.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, *The Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA*, Page 4, Words of Jesus to Sister, May 22, 1954.)

Why was Jesus born? To be the Light of the World! To be our only way back to the Father. To pay the price of ransom for our sins and cancel our debt to God and restore us to Him. To invite us into God’s family through the new covenant in His own Blood which pulses through our mystical veins in the Body of Christ. To display the height and depth and breadth of God’s love for His creatures whom He longs to gather unto Himself. Thus, the human and the divine are wed together in the Word-made-flesh who dwells among us and within us, nearer to us than we are to our own selves. Herein lies that too little understood doctrine of sanctifying grace, the abiding presence of God within the soul, the doctrine so central to the message of Our Lady of America, the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity. God is present in all things by His omnipresent power, but He is deeply and personally present by His transforming and sanctifying love in those who live in the state of grace.

We, too, have a mission! Sister Mildred had a mission! Each of us is called to share in Christ’s redemptive work for the salvation of souls through our Baptism into His Paschal mystery, His death and Resurrection. Some more deeply than others. Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil was chosen to share deeply in Christ’s passion as the Bride of His own Heart, His little white dove whom He wished to lay upon His altar of sacrifice for the salvation of souls. Sister’s mission was to give us the messages and warnings of Our Lady of America for our nation, our Church and our times; to work toward the sanctification of the family through imitation of the Holy Family; for the sanctification of individuals through the Divine Indwelling; and to unite her life with Christ’s as an expiation

for sin and for the salvation of souls. Like Christ, she was a victim for love. It takes holy people and holy families to repair our Church and to save our nation, all nations.

...already in the early 1940's it was made known to me interiorly that my mission was to converge towards the sanctification of the family. (Diary, Page 4.) Our Lady spoke to 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. (Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, letter to her spiritual director, June 5, 1957.)

When one is given a great mission, one is also given great favor. The term "Bride of My Heart" acknowledges Sister's special espousal with Jesus, while the designation "My little white dove" confirms His predilection for humility, for the poor and the little ones, those ready to sacrifice themselves for others. Sister Mildred was such a little one! She wrote her spiritual director, Father Paul F. Leibold, that she had difficulty reconciling herself to God's choice of her for this mission but came to understand that **For This I Was Born!**

...as you know, Father, I couldn't seem to be able to reconcile myself to the fact that God should choose such a nothing like me for so great and tremendous a mission. It seemed so impossible to me that I was often plagued with the thought that I was being deceived, that I was nothing but a fraud, a victim of my own imagination and self-love. Yet the strange thing was, deep down in my soul, I knew this was not so, as I would rather die than be guilty of such things and thus become a stumbling block to others. I knew, in spite of these temptations that harassed me that I lived in the Truth and eventually this truth would free me from these chains. What suffering this caused me, what heaviness of heart, but always I turned to Our Lady with the conviction that through her, help would be given me. It was not in vain. I entrusted my cause to her. On her feast of the holy rosary, the grace and light that flooded my soul marked the beginning of a new phase in my life. I have accepted wholly and entirely the role God has destined for me. There is no longer any question in my mind that it was for this I was born, and for this I must spend myself. I will always be a nothing, yet a nothing full of confidence in Him Who chooses the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of this world to confound the strong. For it is not right that flesh should glory in His sight. How happy I am to be such a nothing, to be counted as naught. "Hide me away, my God, I am only fit to be hidden away in some dark corner, unseen by anyone but You." As Sister continued to pray an extra rosary, Our Lady spoke to her: "I have graced you with my perpetual presence because your mission is a grave one and you will be in constant need of my help."

Sister's mission was to share in the mission of the earthly trinity, becoming with them a co-redeemer with Christ, in the Pauline tradition, for the salvation of souls. Her letters describe Christ's personal invitation to her to share deeply in His passion.

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."

[June 14th, 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?" ... [He assured Sister:] "I will be with you wherever you are, spouse of my Heart. You have nothing to fear." (August 16, 1956 letter to her spiritual director.)

"My little white dove, the evil spirits have been let loose upon the earth, because love has grown cold in the hearts of men. Only sacrificial souls will be able to cast them forth into the infernal abyss from which they have come forth."

"Bride of My Heart, let love be the sacrificial altar of your holocaust. Behold the Furnace of Love, the Heart of your Divine Spouse. Lead to this Eternal Fire, oh My spouse, which burns incessantly in My Adorable Heart, all those who are willing to sacrifice themselves to that Everlasting Love, Who first sacrificed Himself for them." (Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, letter to her spiritual director, June 5, 1957.)

For This Was She Born!

"The ecstatic love of God is revealed especially in the twofold gift which comprises on the one hand the Incarnation and the Holy Eucharist, and on the other, the presence of God in the soul which is sanctified and deified."

(Paul de Jaegher, S.J., ONE WITH JESUS, Newman Bookshop, Westminster, MD, Pg. 2.)

Sister Mildred's Prayer to the Holy Trinity

O Holy Trinity, One God, I beseech You, deprive me of all things if it be Your Will but deprive me not of Yourself. For You are my Life, and if You are lost to me, death will be my portion. For without You, O Divine Presence, there can be no life, only death, for You are the true Life of the soul. How can there be any life without You, the Author of life? When You make known, in a special manner, Your Divine Presence within me I become so enraptured as to forget all things of earth, being completely carried away by the sweetness and strength of Your love. Continue then to live in me, O Trinity Divine, as You lived in the burning Heart of Christ Your Son, the God-Man, that my heart too like His may be consumed in the Fires of Eternal Charity. Amen. (Feast of Holy Trinity, 1947.)

**Copyright© Our Lady of America Devotion, Tiffin, Ohio,
Christmas, December 2022.**

All rights reserved.