

Devotion to Emmanuel – God Within Us!

The Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling, the Doctrine of Sanctifying Grace

In the evening of August 5 [1957], the feast of Our Lady of Snows, as I knelt in my room, Our Lady spoke to me about the Divine Indwelling. It was her life and she lived it perfectly, always conscious of His presence, never forgetting that all her greatness came from within, from Him Who dwelt there, working, loving, and doing good through her. This is what Our Lady means when she speaks of reformation, renewal. It is this about which she is so concerned, namely, sanctification from within.

As Our Lady spoke this, she seemed at the time to be deeply occupied. Though the serenity of her countenance never left her, she spoke with a gravity that made her words all the more solemn. She seemed anxious to impress me with some idea of the greatness of this gift of God to us, namely, His Divine Presence within our souls through sanctifying grace.

(Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil, The Diary, "Our Lady of America," Tiffin, Ohio, Page 18.)

So important is this doctrine of the Divine Indwelling, of sanctifying grace, that Our Lady appeared under a separate image to emphasize it. She appeared as she really and truly was, the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God, and she identified herself: **"I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within."** When Bishop George J. Rehring of the Toledo diocese approved the distribution of the medal of Our Lady of America, he insisted it be accompanied by the leaflet that explains the rich symbolism of the medal and the Divine Indwelling, and that the doctrine of the Divine Indwelling be studied. **"The Divine Indwelling is represented by the Triangle and the Eye on the red shield of the Precious Blood, through which sanctifying grace was made possible to fallen man."** The all-seeing eye of God symbolized His omnipresence, the triangle the trinity of three Divine Persons in the one Godhead, and the blood the intimacy of our bond of life with Jesus through sanctifying grace which gives us a share in His own Divine Nature. We are not only cleansed from sin and restored in our human nature through the Word-made-flesh Who dwelt amongst us, but we are elevated above our natural state and above Adam's preternatural state to a supernatural state, being given a share in God's own life, His Divine Nature.

In February of 1958, Our Lady spoke to Sister Mildred of her particular interest in the youth of our nation and stated that it is they who must be the leaders of this urgently needed movement of renewal on the face of the earth, one she has called for repeatedly. She is also calling youth from other nations to join in this work of renewal.

But the youth must be prepared, and this must be done by instilling into them, not only the knowledge of the Divine Indwelling, but a serious study of It, a living It in such a way that the Divine Presence becomes, as it were, an intimate and necessary part of their life and daily living. From this will flow a great love, a conflagration that will envelop the world in the flames of Divine Charity. This is what Our Lady is working for, because this is the great desire of her Divine Son, and it is to the youth of America that she is holding out this challenge. A medal which Our Lady asked to be made is to be their shield against evil, the picture or statue of Our Lady, the protection of the home, the statue at the Shrine in Washington, D.C., a special safeguard for our country. America, the United States in particular, is being given the tremendous, yet

privileged, opportunity to lead all nations in a spiritual renewal never before so necessary, so important, so vital. (The Diary, Pgs. 24-25.)

[Our Lady then gave all who would follow her in this great battle against evil the title "Torchbearers of the Queen."]

On July 18, 1980, Our Lady further spoke on the importance of this Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity.

Sweet child, beloved of my Son and cherished by me, my message has not been heeded nor have I yet found one to further the cause of renewal within. The Presence of the Trinity within every human being is the focal point, the basis of interior holiness. From this will spring a deep life of prayer and a love for penance as the discipline needed to convert all peoples to a serious preparation for the coming of my Son and His Kingdom. ...

You must try to make my people understand that the life of God within them is the source of their peace and happiness. There is no other way. This is what my Son came to teach and bring and it was for this He lived and died. Unless this mystery of God's Presence within is accepted and lived, peace will not come. It is the only way, believe me, my daughter. (The Diary, Pg. 37.)

What is this mystery of God's Presence within, this Divine Indwelling? In a marvelous old book, **GOD WITHIN US** by Raoul Plus, S.J., published in 1924, Father explores a deeper understanding of this great mystery and gift from God. At that time the world was suffering from World War I and its aftermath. Today we suffer equally from moral decay and war and hatred. It is obvious Christ's redemptive victory is still not complete, not totally won in us. Father says we need a second Pentecost, and to bring it about, we must win God's heart.

We shall win God's heart in proportion as we lay hold on the supernatural. It is a moral principle that like clings to like. God cannot fail to feel attraction and sympathy for the soul which lives after his divine life—which lives, that is to say, supernaturally. He cannot fail to grant the prayers of such a soul. ... It would be difficult to imagine anything in the supernatural life more concrete, and more striking, than the mystery of "God within Us." ... Thus, you will prepare "God's victory," by spreading a devotion to Emmanuel—to "God within Us." ...

Meditating on God, and his immense majesty, Taine compares man with an ant, and the Most High with an unconcerned individual who carelessly brushes aside with his coat the tiny object crawling at his feet. How little Taine understood what God is! Bending over man the Blessed Trinity mourns his misery, and seeks a means of raising him from it. You say that God is too great thus to humble himself? But God is infinite goodness, and his tender love for man is infinite. ... We are indeed, profoundly insignificant creatures. But God's mercy is infinite.

What He would not do for the fallen angels, he will do for us. The state of affairs is this: The crime which has been committed has been committed by a man. Reparation, therefore, must likewise be made by a man. Moreover, the injury done to God has an infinite value—and God alone can perform an action which will have an infinite value. Therefore, the Second Person, the Word, pronounces in the highest heavens, the word of salvation. He will undertake the task of reparation. Son of God, he will become the Son of man. He will take upon him our nature, and become one of us. Like us, he will have a mother. He will lead a life like ours, and bear suffering such as ours. Reparation will then be made by man, because the Word will be made flesh.

Reparation will likewise be made by God, because, in being made flesh, the Word will still remain the Word. So the Incarnation is decided upon. The Savior will become our brother by nature, in order that we may become his brothers by grace. (Plus, S.J., Pgs. X,xi, 16-17)

From the very beginning God intended that we should be His tabernacle, God-bearers, His home, His dwelling place on earth. The Word did not come into our world just to cleanse us of original sin, or personal sin, but to make His dwelling place among us and within us. Only sin can drive Him from our souls. How fitting that we should recognize God within one another. How fitting that we should bow to the God I see in you! Let us reflect on what the symbolism of the manger teaches us about God's dwelling place on earth.

We have often meditated on the manger. Let us try to imagine for a moment that it suddenly becomes a living thing. In the cradle lies Jesus, God made man. We, too, are so many cradles, and within us hides, not the sacred Humanity, but the Divinity of Christ. According to the symbolism of the three Christmas Masses, the first commemorates the birth of the Word in eternity, in the bosom of the Father; the second the birth in time of the Saviour at Bethlehem; and the third the spiritual birth of God in the soul of each one of us, by sanctifying grace. (Plus, Pg. 27.)

Through sanctifying grace, we are indeed God-bearers like Mary, His temple, His tabernacle in flesh, His dwelling place where we can tryst with Him and He with us. St. Gertrude was especially devoted to the mystery of the Divine Indwelling and heard the voice of Our Lord more than once say to her: **"I have chosen thee, that I might dwell in thee, and find in thee my delight."** Jesus often reminded privileged souls of the wonders of His presence in our souls. When Emperor Trajan insulted Ignatius of Antioch for being Christian, Ignatius responded: **"Let no man treat with contempt Ignatius, the God-bearer.** Sister Elizabeth of the Trinity tells how it dawned on her one day that the words of our Lord and St. Paul about God within us were intended to be taken, not metaphorically but literally.

God is within us—i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are within us. "The Three," as she calls them. She will listen to no talk of a far-away God. Her God is close to her. Her "Three" are all there, and her whole existence may be summed up in these few words; "intimacy *within*, with the guests of my soul." From that day onwards her most precious thought (one, too, which we can each one of us share) was that her soul, which bore God within it, was a *heaven*.

Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil and Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, her spiritual director, often referred to their **"divine guest within"** in their letters. St. Joseph, who lived so dearly in the Presence of Jesus in his home at Nazareth, spoke to Sister Mildred about the Divine Indwelling, calling it the **"Secret of Secrets,"** which cannot be taught; it is a gift! May St. Joseph call us to his feet, as he did Sister Mildred, and intercede with our Triune God to bestow this most precious gift upon each one of us, too.

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We are a group of faithful Catholics who knew Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil personally and are dedicated to promoting and protecting the purity, integrity and entirety of her message as Our Lady gave it to Sister and as Sister gave it to us.