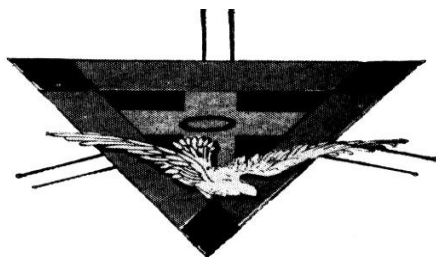


Mary, Model of the Church in Prayer

Spouse of the Holy Spirit



Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered the city, they mounted to the upper room where were staying Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon, the Zealot, and Jude the brother of James. All these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. ...

And when the days of Pentecost were drawing to a close, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a violent wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire, which settled upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak. (Acts of the Apostles 1:12-15; 2:1-5.)

We see here the obedient faith of Mary and the disciples of Jesus who obeyed the Lord's command before His Ascension that they should remain in Jerusalem to pray and wait for the promise of the Father. Not only do we see the importance of obedient faith to the will of God, but we also see the necessity and primacy of prayer and of prayer in community on the part of the disciples, and that important lesson that everything happens according to God's time. Likewise, we see God's mode of operation: first comes the gift and then the mission. Jesus was gifted with thirty years in the cloister of Nazareth, schooled by the most profound example of humility, silence, prayer and obedient faith in the lives of Mary and Joseph in preparation for His mission of only three years. Even while in active ministry, Jesus constantly withdrew to a place apart to commune with His Father. An obedient faith and the primacy of prayer and surrender to the will of God are vital for any disciple.

Luke underlies the importance of Mary's presence in that Upper Room, for she is "the preeminent and wholly unique member of the Church," (*Lumen Gentium*) and, as Mother of Jesus, she is His first disciple and model of obedient faith and the first fruits of His Redemption. Luke tells us that Mary had already been filled with the Holy Spirit at

the Annunciation and, as His Spouse, His temple of prayer, her intercessory prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit upon those gathered there would be supremely efficacious.

Between the all-powerful prayer of Mary in the Glory of heaven and the humble prayer “in the days of her flesh”, there is an event which sets her well between the two groups and which shows the tension between the prayer of the actual Church, poor and imperfect, and the prayer of the heavenly Church, radiant with Glory and sure of the final victory of Christ: it is the presence of Mary in prayer with the disciples in the Upper Room...

In a certain sense, Mary is already in Glory, since the risen Christ makes her share the power of his Glory, to the point that Bossuet wondered how Mary could have managed to live on earth after the resurrection of Jesus while bearing such a burden of Glory! The presence of Mary, screened from Glory, was absolutely necessary in the Upper Room, for she was the only one, after Christ, to have believed and hoped against all hope, as if she could see the Invisible. Through her faith and trust, she truly attracted the Holy Spirit, as a parabolic mirror focuses the rays of the sun, and ignited the fire of Pentecost: “When the apostles were waiting for the Spirit who had been promised to them, she joined her supplication to that of the disciples, thus becoming the model of the Church in prayer.”

It is her absolute and daring faith, her indefectible assurance in the power of the Holy Spirit that makes Mary the Master of prayer for the disciples in the Upper Room. She teaches them, first by her very assiduity, [persistent diligence] to implore, to remain in the city and to persevere in prayer. The disciples are still under the shock of the departure of Jesus; they do not know very well anymore if they have faith, but Jesus has promised them that even though he has left through the front door, he will return by the back door: “And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.” (Luke 24:49) ...

Mary well knows that the sending forth of the Holy Spirit by the Father, in the name of Jesus, is a gratuitous move on the part of God and that no one may be worthy of it, but she also knows that the Gift of the Spirit is not something given arbitrarily. To receive this gift, one must not only believe in it, but must ask for it, seek it and knock: “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.” (Luke 11:13.) ... That is why the Fathers [Church Fathers] gave Mary the beautiful title of “the Almighty supplicant.” She is all powerful on the heart of God, for she has found the key to permanent supplication, the key we have lost with the breach caused by original sin. Our first parents were always on their knees in prayer before God for they lived familiarly with him. At the same time, Mary implores because she is almighty and she knows that the least of her wishes will be answered even before she has formulated it. [As at the wedding feast of Cana.] Mary’s prayer is like the play of an artist: hardly has he touched the manuals of the organ than he releases most powerful resonances in the vault of the cathedral.

(Rev. Jean Lafrance, IN PRAYER WITH MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS, Les Editions Paulines, Sherbrooke, QC, 1988, Pgs. 11-13.)

The Pentecost account speaks of individual tongues of fire parting from the one flame and settling on each of the disciples gathered in the Upper Room. We learn the symbolism of fire from Scripture itself. **Fire is a symbol of God's Presence**, manifested to His chosen people as a pillar of fire by night as they traversed through the desert toward the Promised Land. It is also **a symbol of God's love**, celebrated with burnt offerings that seal God's covenant to care for His people if they will obey His commands. Just as fire gives light, so **fire also symbolizes that special light, the glory of God that is His transcending yet immanent Presence dwelling in their midst**. The Hebrews referred to it as the "**shekinah**," **the unapproachable light** that filled the Holy of Holies with God's Presence surrounding the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle they carried with them on their journey. Such light is a foreshadowing of the heavenly glory that is God's own Self that lights up the eternal city where there is no night, only eternal day. Jesus would call Himself the "Light of the world," and the Book of Revelation would refer to Him as the glorified Paschal Lamb Who is the lamp that lights up the city of God with the glory of God. Moses caught a glimpse of that fiery glory in the burning bush when God confirmed to him the truth that **His essence is His existence: "I Am Who Am!"** – the Uncreated, All-Holy Lord, Sovereign of the Universe, the Giver of Life without Whom nothing would exist and in Whom everything has its meaning.

We see that same fire come from on high as the Holy Spirit descends on those at prayer in the Upper Room to baptize the infant Church as a new creation, adorning her with gifts of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord and a new abiding Presence of God and His glory in His Holy Spirit. That fire from on high filled them with the light of God's truth and the power of His love, opening their eyes and minds and hearts to a divine understanding of all that Jesus had said and done and who He is. Thereupon those uneducated, poor and frightened men immediately went out with amazing boldness to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ as the Son of the living God, born of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, Who suffered and died for our sins, rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of the Father from whence He will come again in the last days to judge the world and claim His complete Lordship over all. So Peter, the rock, the first Pope of the infant Church, armed only with the utter clarity of Divine Truth, declared to the Jewish leadership that this Jesus whom they had ordained to have crucified is their long awaited Messiah, the son of David, the only Savior of the world, and those who believe in Him and are baptized will be saved.

With Pentecost we see the works of our Triune God complete in human history. The Old Testament revealed the age of the Father in the works of creation, the formation of a people with whom He made a covenant and to whom He gave His law and the promise of a Savior to redeem them from sin and restore them to Himself. The Annunciation in the New Testament reveals the age of the Son Who is the Father's

Beloved and the ancient promise fulfilled, Jesus, true God and true man, the Word made flesh in the virginal womb of Mary, the Redeemer Who lived, suffered and died for our sins, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, leaving us the promise of a new Advocate Who would help us understand everything He taught us in order to be saved. God's Holy Spirit would keep the Divine Trinitarian Presence alive in the Church Jesus founded upon the apostles and would protect it from error until the end of time when it, too, would be taken up into heavenly glory. Pentecost completes the Paschal mystery and the age of the Son in the work of Redemption as it inaugurates this final age of the Holy Spirit within the Church of Jesus Christ, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. We live in this age of the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, who unites us in communion with our Triune God through the sacramental life and proclamation of God's Word within the Church, the Bride of Christ, and sanctifies us with the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity, moving us from glory to glory until we are home in our Father's house, home in the arms of our God from Whose love we were born.

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him." (John 14:15-21.)

It is this **Spirit of Truth** we wish to focus on as we relate the experience of Pentecost to the message of Our Lady of America® as given to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, beginning with the eve of the feast of the North American martyrs on September 25, 1956. We see clearly from this message, first the great gift and favor of Our Lady's appearance, especially to her children in America, and secondly, the corresponding mission and responsibility Our Lady has given to America in particular to lead the world away from a culture of the flesh, apostasy and death and toward a return to faith, purity and the peace of Christ through a reform of life, sanctification from within, by understanding and living in the Divine Indwelling Presence of the Most Holy Trinity. It is the Spirit who opposes the evil one and his lies and twists of truth and his divisive work of hatred and unforgiveness. It is the Spirit Who gives us the fullness of truth revealed in Jesus Christ, our only Savior and Mediator before the throne of the Father, source of all purity and peace and life. Jesus' proclamation, "**I am the Way, the Truth and the Life,**" may be the most important phrase in the Scripture for it gives us in simple and few words what is the essence of the Christian life—to know Christ Jesus and in Him to live and move and have our being. This is true happiness and eternal glory, the destiny for which we were created.

Let us place ourselves in that Upper Room and experience the baptism of fire from on high. Then let us ponder the wisdom of the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of Jesus, who prays **with us and for us** and counsels us on the will of the Father for our salvation as she comes to us under this new image of Our Lady of America®.

“I am Our Lady of America. I desire that my children honor me, especially by the purity of their lives. ... 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.” ... Our Blessed Mother called herself Our Lady of America in response to the love and desire that reached out for this special title in the hearts of her children in America. This title was the sign of her pleasure at the confidence our land places in her and as a reward for its staunch and childlike devotion to her.

“I wish to gather about me, my tender child, soldier and valiant bearer of the torch, an army of brave lovers, who as my torchbearers will enkindle the fire of Divine Love in the souls of men. Only those who are strong in love can become my soldiers to bear aloft, not the sword of destruction, but the sword of fire, the flaming torch of Divine Charity. ... Be my army of chaste soldiers, ready to fight to the death to preserve the purity of your souls. ... I wish to make the whole of America my shrine by making every heart accessible to the love of my Son.”

“Patience, sweet child! The Will of the Father must be dearer to you than all else. This is the lesson every soul desiring intimate union with my Son must strive to learn.”

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA®, Fostoria, Ohio, Pgs. 10-12; 19.)

Our Lady’s favor and mission to America is clear, but Our Lady warns us we must live in the Spirit of Truth, with humility and simplicity of life if we are to find our salvation in Christ as willed by the Father who desires an intimate communion with us in His Triune and unending glory in their Holy Spirit.

“Beloved daughter, how many let human wisdom guide them through life. This is a serious mistake that will cause much suffering. Unless human wisdom is guided and saturated by Divine Wisdom, it is a helpless yet dangerous tool in human hands. Helpless because it lacks understanding and true knowledge, dangerous because it leads to wrong paths of darkness where the only light is false like a mirage in the desert.” (Diary, Pg. 39.)

“Dear child, evil is so insidious that it often passes for good. The simple and pure of heart alone can detect the difference. Many good works and many a good person or persons are thwarted and destroyed by apparently good

people who are manipulated by the powers of evil because they do not possess that finer sense of being able to detect a false spirit from a true one.”

[Our Lord speaks.] “My faithful spouse, the world does not know me. My people do not know me. I am a stranger to them. Many claim to love me yet hate and kill their neighbor and say they do it in My Name. These listen to the false prophets who are manipulated by the powers of evil. Me they do not follow. Me they do not hear. The Bible, the Gospels are to them just so many words that they throw out to those hungering to know about the real Christ who seeks their love, who holds out the true meaning of the Gospels, the only One who can lead them to the Father. With the same tongue with which these benighted souls praise and proclaim their love and dedication to Me they curse and condemn their neighbor whom I redeemed as I did them.

Many unnatural acts are being committed in the name of love. This evil is being disguised and tolerated as an intrinsic right like any other. [Our emphasis.] Even some of My priests and consecrated virgins are being caught up into this web of evil, not realizing its terrible consequences.

My dearest one, many false doctrines are being taught and for many the true Christ is never made known. The false prophets and self-proclaimed Messiahs are drawing many away from Me, the Way, the Truth and the Life. I am the true Messiah who was sent and the only one proclaimed as such by My Father. Seek Me for I only am truth, I only am the Christ. (Diary, Pg. 40.)

[Our Lady’s words] “Beloved daughter, sweet child, there are those in high places in the Church who disobey and refuse respect to my Son’s Vicar on earth. These betray the teachings inspired by the Divine Spirit sent by my Son to be with the Church ‘til the end of time.

There are those who teach false doctrines, and those who repudiate the Holy Sacraments. They are filled with intellectual pride. And so refusing to follow my humble Son, they are being destroyed together with those who misguidedly follow them down the path of error and falsehood. Pray for these poor ones who do not realize the misery and wretchedness they are in and to which they have and are leading others.

Beloved daughter, there is so much untruth in the truth that is sought. Truth comes from Him who has been sent by my Son, the Spirit who is Truth. Pray continuously to be guided by this Spirit who is the true enlightenment. Many are those who seek truth from spirits who are false and lead only to a greater ignorance and a worse destruction. The Divine Spirit abides in my Son Jesus and is sent by Him. All other spirits are only true in Him, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. (Diary, Pg. 43.)

Beware of any spirit which does not abide in the Holy Spirit and does not receive power and light from Him. Meditate on this often, dear child, so that only the Spirit of Truth may abide in you and be the light of your journey to the Father.” (Diary, Pg. 44.)

[And oh those sad words from our Mother] “The Divine Spirit is there but you are continuing in your blindness and so blotting out the Divine Light and closing your ears to eternal truth. I beg of you to heed my voice or there will be no more time for you to turn back the Divine Wrath. I weep for you because I love you and wish, my dear children, to spare you this terrible suffering. Listen and pity your Mother.” (Diary, Pg. 45.)

Let us ask our dear Mother, the “almighty supplicant,” our most powerful intercessor in heaven, to beg the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for a new Pentecost, even greater than the first, upon the universal Church in order to rid it of the smoke of Satan that has entered even into high places within it, and to clear the clouds of false teachings and faulty human wisdom that are leading so many into apostasy and a culture of death, a culture of the flesh, that can only end in eternal ruin. Let us pray with Mary for a personal Pentecost that will convict us of our sins, not to condemn us but to free us by exposing them to the light of God’s merciful love and forgiveness. Let us beg the Holy Spirit to send fire into our hearts and to emblazon God’s truth in our minds with unmistakable clarity, to pour out upon us the same fire that made the apostles ever so bold in declaring God’s truth to the outside world, even in the face of persecution and death. “Convict” comes from root words that mean “conquer” and “with.” **We conquer evil with God’s truth.** May God’s truth be the fiery sword we carry to burn His love into our own hearts so we might set the whole world aflame with the knowledge and love of God, the only true happiness we can ever know.

Come, Holy Spirit, come! Burn the truth of God’s Word into our minds and our hearts that we may live and be saved by It!

By thy holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil!

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