

Miracles for America



the United States in Particular Greater than Those Granted at Lourdes and Fatima!

On the eve of the feast of the North American Martyrs, September 25, 1956, as I was making the Holy Hour from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m., I was conscious of the distinct and special feeling of the presence of Our Lady. She stood by my side and spoke to me. I felt, rather than saw her, though I did see a part of her white gown and a small portion of her blue sash. I was under the impression that she came as Our Lady of Lourdes, and she herself confirmed this. Our Lady promised that greater miracles than those granted at Lourdes and Fatima would be granted here in America, the United States in particular, if we would do as she desires. [our emphasis]

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, Diary, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, Ohio, Pg. 9.)

Having just concluded the liturgical celebration of the Paschal Mystery we look forward to the feast of the Ascension of Jesus into the glory of His Father and to the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon us in the feast of Pentecost. It is always in the name of Jesus that miracles are performed. Sacred Scripture records an abundance of miracles performed by Jesus during His time on earth in His public ministry and after His Resurrection until His Ascension into heaven. These miracles gave testimony to His divine nature as the Son of God, Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Messiah Who was pre-announced in the first covenant God made with humankind in the Garden of Eden. God continued His covenant with mankind throughout salvation history in the Hebrew Testament, speaking through His priests and prophets. That covenant was fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ, who established His Church as the new Ark of Salvation in a new Christian Covenant that is the Law of Grace. In this Christian Covenant miracles continue, most especially through the sacramental life of the Church and through the intercession of Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Mystical Christ, His Church.

We define miracles as extraordinary events manifesting divine intervention in human affairs; they involve a sign, wonder and power. Miracles are the very nature of God, for there is nothing impossible to Him and He is the author of all that is, and, therefore, has authority over all that is. He can use the laws of Nature to achieve His purpose or transcend those same laws in order to bring about wonders beyond human power, comprehension and explanation. He can work miracles on a large, public scale, as in the multiplication of loaves and fishes to feed the multitudes, or in the dancing of the sun that thousands witnessed at Fatima. Or, He can work miracles as quietly as a heartbeat, bringing a hardened sinner to repentance through the intercessory prayer of an unknown benefactor, or as forcefully as a priest's exorcism rite to set someone free from demonic oppression or possession. This is that awesome Law of Grace at work, that sanctifying presence of the Divine Indwelling God in each soul, the continued Presence of God in our world in the Sacrament of His Church.

Scripture relates how Jesus shared His power to work miracles for the good of others with His Apostles. Most assuredly, He shared that power with His Mother also. History shows us how many times God has sent Mary to her children on earth to show them the way back to Jesus when heresy abounds and the darkness of Satan's lies overwhelms us. In Mexico, in 1531, the symbolism on the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe clarified the Truth about God for the Aztec Indians who consequently abandoned the evil practice of human sacrifice and pagan worship in order to be baptized by the thousands. The spring waters at Lourdes, France, continue to bring miraculous healings of body and soul to those who bathe in them or visit there on a pilgrimage of faith. Can we imagine how many conversions and healings took place the day the sun danced at Fatima in Portugal, and how many miracles continue to happen for those who heed Our Lady's call to repentance and prayer for the conversion of sinners and for world peace, for the conversion of Russia and all the nations who have come under its rule of atheistic communism. Is there any nation today free of its errors?

Each year, on April 26, the Church honors Mary under the title of "Our Lady of Good Counsel." When Jesus ascended into heaven He did not heed His dear Mother's plea to take her with Him, for He willed her to remain behind to mother and counsel His infant Church as she had mothered and counseled Him in His Sacred Humanity. Who could have known more intimately and extensively the ways of God than the Mother taught by Jesus Himself? Who could have been more enlightened about the mysteries of Christ's life and death and the mystery of the Godhead than she who is the most beloved daughter of the Father, Mother of the Son, and the most pure Spouse of the Holy Spirit? Popes throughout the ages have sought her good counsel in leading Christ's Church safely through the horrific storms of Satan's attacks and attempts to destroy it.

The image of Our Lady of Good Counsel has an amazing history. It is a half image showing Jesus resting on Mary's left arm while His own left hand grasps at the rim of her dress, indicating the intimacy of nursing. His right hand reaches around Mary's neck as if to hug her to Himself as one, embracing the human in the divine. In the original image Mary's eyes are open and her face gives the sense of realization and contentment at being wrapped in the mystery of God. The painting of Our Lady of Good Counsel is an *Eleousa* in which the infant Jesus is nestled against the Virgin Mary's cheek. The term comes from the Greek



word which means *tenderness* or *showing mercy*. In our Western Church this type is often known as the *Virgin of Tenderness*. In the original image the gaze of both Mother and Child is turned as much outward toward us in mercy as toward each other in tenderness. Some variations of the original icon show Mary's eyes closed and her face turned more downward, expressive of her great humility, while the eyes of Jesus gaze upward at her in filial admiration.

This sacred image, like so many of Mary's images, has its own history of miracles that begins with the Catholics in Albania who had great devotion to Mary and built many shrines and churches in her honor. They sought her counsel and consolation during times of foreign occupation and religious persecution. This image hung over the main altar in a church in the town of Scutari. During the Ottoman invasion and conquest in the fifteenth century two Albanians escaped but went first to the Church to pray for their safety. Suddenly, they saw the image begin to move away from the wall. They followed it, like a star, all the way to Rome, but then it disappeared.

To understand how the image got its name we must go to a church in the small town of Genazanno southeast of Rome. Pope Sixtus III, who reigned from 432-440, called for help in renovating the Church of St. Mary Major in Rome and the people of Genazzano were most generous. In return they were given some property upon which they built a church and called it Our Lady of Good Counsel. In the 1300's the church was entrusted to the Augustinian order. By the fifteenth century it was in grave need of repair. A local widow, Petruccia de Geneo, spent all her meager funds on its renovation, but the money ran out and the work had to be halted. The townspeople had ridiculed her effort, refusing to support it; they now ridiculed her more, calling her effort "Petruccia's Folly." Each year the town celebrated the feast of St. Mark. Late in the day on his feast April 25, 1467, the people began to hear exquisite music and saw a cloud descend from the sky upon an unfinished wall of the church. When the cloud dissipated, a beautiful portrait of Our Lady and the Christ Child hung there in mid air. The church bells began to ring on their own and people flocked to the town to see what was happening. Immediately Our Lady began to work her miracles, curing the sick, converting the sinner, answering prayers. The two Albanians who had fled their homeland and

had followed their image of the tender Mother and Child to Rome, only to see it disappear, heard about this miraculous image and came to see. What joy! It was their own Zoja e Bekueme, the Blessed Lady, who had led them to Rome. They then settled in Genazzano. The painting is described as a fresco executed on a thin layer of plaster or porcelain not much thicker than paper, a material resembling egg shell. It appears suspended in mid-air in its frame, with approximately an inch of space between it and the wall behind it [much like the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe which is not actually on the tilma but in front of it]. The only support is on the lower edge on one of its sides. The work is probably a fourteenth century Umbrian work. There are also indications that the image appears to bear different expressions according to particular situations. It seems Our Lady wished to be honored under this image and title throughout the whole Church.

The Pope investigated and learned it was the same image as that of Our Lady of Shkroda (Counsel), and that the original image was indeed missing from the Church in Scutari, Albania. The image took on the name of the Church in Genazzano, Our Lady of Good Counsel, and the devotion to Our Lady of Good Counsel began to spread throughout the world, particularly through the work of the Augustinians. Pope after Pope sought the guidance of Our Lady of Good Counsel and many visited the Church in Genazanno. The image received its papal coronation on November 17, 1682. In 1753, Pope Benedict XIV established the Pious Union of Our Lady of Good Counsel to promote devotion to Mary under this title. In 1903 Pope Leo XIII raised the church of Our Lady of Good Counsel to a minor basilica. He also endorsed the White Scapular of Our Lady of Good Counsel, added the title to the Litany of Loreto and granted special privileges to the Augustinian order. A feast day to honor Our Lady of Good Counsel was established on April 26 so as not to interfere with the feast day of St. Mark on April 25. Pope John XXIII visited her shrine to pray for the success of the Second Vatican Council.

Reference: <http://campus.udayton.edu/mary/meditations/olgc.html>

Miracles through the intercession of Mary are widespread and are so often associated with her images and churches dedicated in her honor. The medal of the Immaculate Conception given to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830 wrought so many miracles that it is now known as the Miraculous Medal. The message of Our Lady of America® given to Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil in 1956 and thereafter, likewise conveys the tenderness of our mother and her mercy towards us and her promise of miracles in gratitude for our devotion to her, but we, too, must heed her counsel.

“I am pleased, my child, with the love my children in America give to me, especially through my glorious and unique privilege of the Immaculate Conception. I promise to reward their love by working through the power of my Son’s Heart and my Immaculate Heart miracles of grace among them. I do not promise miracles of the body, but of the soul. ... For it is mainly through these miracles of grace that the Holy Trinity is glorified among men and nations. Let America continue and grow in its love for me, and I in return, in union with the Heart of my Son, promise to work wonders in her. My child, I desire that this be known.” (Diary, Pg. 10.) ...

“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.” (Diary, Pg. 11.) ... [Sister wrote:] Our Lady, moreover, often emphasized her desire that the Shrine in Washington, D.C., be made a place of special pilgrimage. She wishes to be honored there as Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin. (Diary, Pg. 12.)

On October 13, 1956, the feast of the sixth apparition of Our Lady of Fatima and the miracle of the sun, Our Lady appeared to Sister Mildred holding a replica of the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception even though the shrine had not yet been finished. These are Sister's words:

Today the Holy Virgin appeared to me as I was working in my room. Our Lady was very beautiful, and she was again smiling in her heavenly way. She was dressed in the same manner as when I first saw her, except that her Immaculate Heart did not appear. Instead of the lily, she held with both hands a small replica of the finished Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. She then began to speak. Her presence overwhelmed me with its holiness. I was compelled to stop my work, for it was impossible to go on. I then knelt down and wrote Our Lady's words as she desired: “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.)

On November 15, 1956, Our Lady taught Sister the ejaculation: **“By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil.”** She then asked Sister to draw a picture of her first appearance and requested that a statue be made according to this likeness, be carried in solemn procession, and then be placed in the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. She wished to be honored there in a special way as **“Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin®.”** (Diary, Pg. 14.)

Like so many devoted children of Mary before us, we seek her protection, guidance and consolation, for our souls, our families, our nations, our Church, and for the whole world, especially in this age that is filled with so much error, atheism, impurity and darkness, war and natural disasters. Let us go to her to learn how to imbibe the spirit of Jesus. Let us heed her most tender and maternal words:

“But to make your hearts grow more and more like to the heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother, whose heart is most like His. From this Pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with infinite delight upon such souls and makes them Its heaven upon earth.” (Diary, Pg. 16, February 3, 1957.)

... [On the feast of the Immaculate Heart, August 22, 1957, Mary said:] “My heart, my Immaculate Heart, is the channel through which the graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men. ... There must be sanctification from within. I will work my miracles of grace only in those who ask for them and empty their souls of the love and attachment to sin and all that is displeasing to my Son. Souls who cling to sin cannot have their hands free to receive the treasures of grace that I hold out to them. (Diary, Pgs. 18-19.) Dear child, ...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.” (Diary, Pg. 37.)

The Catholic mystic, Venerable Mary of Agreda, records in her *Mystical City of God* a vision in which she sees Our Lady being crowned in heaven while a voice from the throne declares God’s will to exalt her utter humility and to dispense His mercy through her as the Empress and Mistress and Protectress of the Militant Church, its Advocate, Mother and Teacher. While this is private revelation, it is not contradictory to the long held belief in the Church that regards Mary as Mediatrix of Grace. God has certainly made Mary Our Lady of Good Counsel and Mother of Mercy.

... Thou hast humiliated Thyself in thy own estimation to the lowest place; receive now the supreme dignity deserved by Thee and, as a participation in our Divinity, the dominion over all the creatures of our Omnipotence. ...and by the power We now give thee thou shalt subject hell with all its demons and inhabitants. ... In thy hands and at thy pleasure We place the influences and forces of the heavens, the moisture of the clouds, the growths of the earth; and all of them do Thou distribute according to thy will, and our own shall be at thy disposal for the execution of thy wishes. Thou shalt be the Empress and Mistress of the militant Church, its Protectress, its Advocate, its Mother and Teacher. Thou shalt be the special Patroness of the Catholic countries; and whenever they, or the faithful, or any of the children of Adam call upon Thee from their heart, serve or oblige Thee, Thou shalt relieve and help them in their labors and necessities. Thou shalt be the Friend, the Defender and the Chieftainess of all the just and of our friends; all of them Thou shalt comfort, console and fill with blessings according to their devotion to Thee. In view of all this we make Thee the Depository of our riches, the Treasurer of our goods; we place into thy hands the helps and blessings of our grace for distribution; nothing do We wish to be given to the world, which does not pass through thy hands; and nothing do We deny, which Thou wishest to concede to men. Grace shall be diffused in thy lips for obtaining all that Thou wishest and ordainest in heaven and on earth, and everywhere shall angels and men obey Thee; because whatever is ours shall be thine, just as Thou hast always been ours; and Thou shalt reign with Us forever. (Venerable Mary of Agreda, THE MYSTICAL CITY OF GOD, Vol. IV, chapter XXII, #779, pg. 657.)

Our Lady is clearly an Eleousa from heaven for all the world. On May 5, 1957, Sister Mildred Neuzil relates in a letter how Our Lady of America® appeared, showing and describing herself as our **“Mother of Mercy.”**

Our Lady showed herself to me today as the Mother of Mercy. With her arms extended, her blue mantle affording a safe refuge for the sinner, she said, “I am the Mother of Mercy. Under my mantle I will hide my children. The justice of God will not reach them if they seek refuge ‘neath the protection of my mercy. My Son gives to me all those souls who come to me with confidence, calling upon my aid. Their salvation is in my hands. I will obtain for them the necessary graces to save their souls.

Come to me, poor suffering and frightened ones. I am your Mother. Never will I forsake you. Only come to me with a wholehearted and loving trust. Place your souls into my keeping. I am that faithful Mother who never forsakes her children. Honor me by your confidence and love. This I desire and ask of you, my poor children. Do not deny the wishes of your Mother.”

O dear Lady of America®, we honor you as our Patroness, Advocate and Mother of Mercy and beg you to hide us, hide all of America, beneath your mantle of mercy from the terrible justice of God our many sins so rightly deserve!

***By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary,
deliver us from evil.***

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Fostoria, Ohio, April, 2013.**

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