

The Immaculate Conception in God's Awesome Plan of Salvation

The most Blessed Virgin Mary was, from the first moment of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God and by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, preserved immune from all stain of original sin. (Pope Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854.)

The “splendor of an entirely unique holiness” by which Mary is “enriched from the first instant of her conception” comes wholly from Christ; “she is redeemed, in a more exalted fashion, by reason of the merits of her Son.” The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person “in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” and chose her “in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.”

The Fathers of the Eastern tradition call the Mother of God “the All-Holy” (Panagia) and celebrate her as “free from any stain of sin, as though fashioned by the Holy Spirit and formed as a new creature.” By the grace of God Mary remained free of every personal sin her whole life long.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #'s 491, 492 and 493.)

In our December 8, 2008 newsletter we spoke of the necessity of this second singular privilege of Our Lady's, her Immaculate Conception, precisely because of her first singular privilege, her predestined vocation to be the Mother of the Divine Humanity, Savior of the world, the Divine One into whose presence not the slightest impurity can come. So Mary, by her Immaculate Conception, was redeemed by her own Son prior to the actual redemptive act in human history, preserved from original sin and all its effects from the first moment of her conception in the womb of her mother, Anna, years before Jesus' redeeming death on the cross. Mary's redemption, a need she shared with all humankind as a daughter of Adam, was accomplished in a unique and far more exalted fashion than ours. **For us *sin is removed through the cleansing waters of Baptism, but Mary was redeemed in anticipation of the redemptive act, preserved from every sin and every effect of sin,*** so that her very self would become the new “Holy of Holies,” the All-Pure created One in whose flesh the living God would come to dwell, untouched by any impurity whatsoever. We spoke how these two singular privileges, the Divine Maternity and the Immaculate Conception, necessitate the other two, Mary's Perpetual Virginity and her glorious Assumption into heaven, for Mary's role in human history and in God's plan of salvation is so unique and so

stupendous that her whole being was consecrated, freely set aside solely for the will and pleasure of God. This is the meaning of her perpetual virginity, to be totally surrendered and espoused to God, totally emptied of self and filled with grace, never to err, never to take her “**fiat**” back, to be completely one with her God. And, having been favored with this “**fullness of grace**” and “**preserved from all sin, original and personal,**” she would not be subject to the decay of the body which is the effect of sin, but would consequently experience the fruit of Redemption, the promised resurrection of the body, without having to wait for the second coming of the Redeemer in all His glory to judge the living and the dead and to raise up the bodies of His faithful ones to be reunited with their souls in eternal glory, forever espoused to Him as His glorious Mystical Body, Bride of the Lamb, in heaven’s unending wedding feast.

No creature could enjoy greater intimacy or more holy communion with God, through Jesus, the only Mediator with the Father, than His own Mother! Because of her role as Mother of Jesus, Mother of the Church, spiritual mother of all the living, and because her role in salvation makes her intercession with Jesus a complimentary part of His own mediation with the Father, Mary enjoys a fifth privilege that has long been understood within the Church, even though not defined as a dogma as her other privileges have been, and that is **Mediatrice of the grace Jesus has won for us**. Is it not the Father’s will that we come to Jesus through His Mother? The Old Covenant prepared us for accepting Mary in this position when it unfolded for us the role of the mother of the King in the history of God’s people. Since kings often had more than one wife in those days, the king could not favor one over the other without causing utter havoc in his kingdom, so he placed at his right hand instead, his mother. It is said that no matter what the King’s mother asked for, it would be granted. What comfort this is for us to know we can approach the Mother of the King of kings and ask for whatever we need and expect to receive it, as the King will not refuse His Mother. And the Father will not refuse the Son: “Whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He will give you.” What a priceless treasure our non-Catholic Christian brethren are missing when they do not understand the place of honor God Himself has given to Mary at the right hand of Jesus our Lord! How awesome is our God as shown in His favor to Mary whose freedom He respected by asking her consent to her predestined vocation as Mother of the Sacred Humanity, and whose “fiat” made our salvation possible according to the plan of God. We invite you to read again our previous newsletter on the Immaculate Conception and to ponder this awesome plan of salvation and Mary’s maternal role in it.

http://www.ourladyofamerica.com/the_message/TheImmaculateConception.pdf

In this current newsletter, however, we want to focus even more on the splendor of God in this unfathomable mystery of Redeeming Love so manifest in Mary’s Immaculate Conception and her Divine Maternity. While the Church defines the dogma

of the Immaculate Conception as occurring in human history at the first moment of Mary's conception in her mother's womb, we want to focus on those words –

The Father blessed Mary more than any other created person in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places and chose her in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love. (Catechism, # 492)

“Chose her in Christ before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless before him in love.”

While we are not obligated to believe in private revelations because they are not part of the deposit of Faith which ended with the death of the last apostle, the beloved disciple John, the Church does encourage us to discern and use wisely as gifts from heaven those private revelations that are not contrary to Church teaching. Since Pope John Paul II declared Anne Catherine Emmerich “blessed” on October 3, 2004, we can safely assume the Church has found no moral or doctrinal error in her visions, many of which have information that is confirmed in historical sources. As we enter into this beautiful Advent season and focus on its key figure, Mary, we will ponder Anne Catherine Emmerich's vision concerning the birth of the Immaculate One from the bosom of Life Itself and of the creation of her soul from the depths of the Divine that left the angels speechless with awe when it was presented to them. There are no words to describe the Love of our God. Scripture says so well: **“Eyes have not seen, nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man what God has prepared for those who love Him.”** Holy is His name!

I had a vision of the creation of Mary's most holy soul and of its being united to her most pure body. In the glory by which the Most Holy Trinity is usually represented in my visions I saw a movement like a great shining mountain, and yet also like a human figure; and I saw something rise out of the midst of this figure towards its mouth and go forth from it like a shining brightness. Then I saw this brightness standing separate before the Face of God, turning and shaping itself—or rather being shaped, for I saw that while this brightness took human form, yet it was by the Will of God that it received a form so unspeakably beautiful. I saw, too, that God showed the beauty of this soul to the angels, and that they had unspeakable joy in its beauty. I am unable to describe in words all that I saw and understood.

(Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich, THE LIFE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Templegate, Springfield, IL, 1954, pg. 73.)

Anne Catherine spoke much of Mary's ancestors, identifying them as belonging to the Essenes who had priestly and married members. They embraced a life of

simplicity, austerity and prayer and were filled with an insatiable hunger and longing for the coming of the Messiah. The married couples often lived apart in long periods of continence and the women among them who knew well they were in the line of promise for giving birth to the Savior sought frequent guidance from the prophet in their midst as to who to marry and when the Mother of the Messiah would be born among them. Would that we might long for the Savior this Advent season as intensely as Anne Catherine describes the longing of Mary's ancestors for the promised Redeemer.

They were so devout and so full of longing towards God that I often saw them, alone in the fields by day and by night too, running about and crying to God with such intense desire that, in the hunger of their hearts, they tore open their garments at their breasts, as if God were about to burn Himself into their hearts with the hot rays of the sun, or to quench with the moonlight and starlight their thirst for the fulfillment of the promise. (Emmerich, Pg. 2.)

Mary's parents, Anna and Joachim, according to Anne Catherine, had a daughter, Maria Heli, who did not bear the signs of the promise. Thereafter they were left barren for many years and cried out to God in the shame inflicted upon them by the priests in the temple and their neighbors who considered their subsequent infertility a punishment from God, but God heard their relentless prayers. Anne Catherine describes thus the appearance of an angel to Anna with the message from heaven regarding Mary's conception within her.

After she had slept for a short time, I saw a brightness pouring down towards her from above, which on approaching her bed was transformed into the figure of a shining youth. It was the angel of the Lord, who told her that she would conceive a holy child; stretching his hand over her, he wrote great shining letters on the wall which formed the name MARY. Thereupon the angel dissolved into the light and disappeared. During this time Anna seemed to be wrapped in a secret, joyful dream. She rose half-waking from her couch, prayed with great intensity, and then fell asleep again without having completely recovered consciousness. After midnight she awoke joyful, as if by an inner inspiration, and now she saw, with alarm mixed with joy, the writing on the wall. This seemed to be of shining golden-red letters, large and few in number; she gazed at them with unspeakable joy and contrite humility until day came, when they faded away. ... In the moment when the light of the angel had enveloped Anna in grace, I saw a radiance under her heart and recognized in her the chosen Mother, the illuminated vessel of the grace that was at hand. What I saw in her I can only describe by saying that I recognized in her the cradle and tabernacle of the holy child she was to conceive and preserve; a mother

blessed indeed. I saw that by God's grace Anna was able to bear fruit. ... I saw Anna as the cradle of all mankind's salvation, and at the same time as a sacred altar-vessel, opened, yet hidden behind a curtain. ... (Anna was at that time, I think, forty-three years old.) ...

Remembering his humiliation at the Temple, he [Joachim] had abandoned the idea of going up as usual to Jerusalem for the feast [Tabernacles] and offering sacrifices, but as he was praying I saw an angel appear to him, telling him to be of good courage and to journey to the Temple, for his sacrifice would be accepted and his prayers granted. He would meet his wife under the Golden Gate. (Emmerich, Pgs. 31-32.)

Joachim then went to the Temple and offered sacrifice and this time the priests not only accepted his sacrifices but the priest was **led by a light from above** to take Joachim up to the golden altar of incense in the Holy Place and to leave him alone there. Anne Catherine goes on to say:

I saw approaching him [Joachim] a shining figure of an angel, such as later appeared to Zacharias when he received the promise of the Baptist's birth. The angel spoke to Joachim, and gave him a scroll on which I recognized, written in shining letters, the three names Helia, Hanna, Miriam. Beside the last of the names I saw the picture of a little Ark of the Covenant or tabernacle. Joachim fastened this scroll to his breast under his garment. The angel told him that his unfruitfulness was no disgrace for him, but on the contrary, an honour, for the child his wife was to conceive was to be the immaculate fruit of God's blessing upon him and the crowning point of the blessing of Abraham. Joachim, being unable to grasp this, was led by the angel behind the veil hanging in front of the Holy of Holies. Between this veil and the bars of the screen before the Holy of Holies was a space large enough to stand in. I saw the angel approach the Ark of the Covenant, and it seemed to me as if he took something out of it, for I saw him hold towards Joachim a shining globe or circle of light, bidding him breathe upon it and look into it.... Then I saw as if all kinds of pictures appeared in the circle of light when Joachim breathed on it and that these were visible to him. His breath had in no way dimmed the circle of light, and the angel told him that the conception of Anna's child would be as untarnished as this globe, which had remained shining in spite of his having breathed on it. Thereupon I saw as if the angel lifted the globe until it stood like an encircling halo in the air, in which I saw, as through an opening in it, a series of pictures starting with the Fall and ending with the Redemption of mankind. The whole course of the world passed before my eyes as one picture merged into another. ... Above, at the very summit, I saw the Blessed Trinity, and below and on one side of the Trinity I saw the Garden of Eden, with Adam and Eve, the Fall, the promise of Redemption and all its

prototypes—Noah, the Flood, the Ark, the receiving of the blessing through Abraham, its handing on to his firstborn Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, how it was taken from Jacob by the angel with whom he struggled, how the blessing came to Joseph in Egypt and increased in glory in him and in his wife. I saw how the sacred presence of the blessing was removed by Moses from Egypt with relics of Joseph and his wife Aseneth, and became the Holy of Holies of the Ark of the Covenant, the presence of the living God among His people. Then I saw the reverence paid by God's people to this sacred thing and their ceremonies respecting it; I saw the relationships and marriages which formed the sacred genealogy of Our Lady's ancestry, as well as all the prototypes and symbols of her and of Our Saviour in history and in the prophets. All this I saw in encircling symbols and also rising from the lower part of the ring of light. I saw pictures of great cities, towers, palaces, thrones, gates, gardens, and flowers, all strangely woven together as it were by bridges of light; and all were being attacked and assaulted by fierce beasts and other figures of might. These pictures all signified how Our Blessed Lady's ancestral family, from which God was to take Flesh and be made Man, had been led, like all that is holy, by God's grace through many assaults and struggles. ... I saw many pictures of this kind, relating to the history of the ancestry of Our Lady; and the bridges and passages which joined all together signified the victory over all attempts to disturb, hinder, or interrupt the work of salvation. It was as if by God's compassion there had been poured into mankind, as into a muddy stream, a pure flesh and a pure blood, and as if this had with great toil and difficulty to reconstitute itself out of its scattered elements, the whole stream striving the while to draw it into its troubled waters; and then as if by the countless mercies of God and the faithful co-operation of mankind, it had at last issued forth, after many pollutions and many cleansings, in an unending stream out of which rose the Blessed Virgin, from whom the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us. ...The pictures in the globe unfolded themselves still further till they reached the fulfillment of all God's compassion towards mankind, so divided and dispersed in its fallen state, and ended, on the side opposite the Garden of Eden, with the heavenly Jerusalem at the foot of the Throne of God. (Emmerich, Pgs. 34-36.)

Anne Catherine describes the birth of Mary thus:

In 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 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. This knowledge of hers we cannot understand, because our knowledge grows on the tree of good and evil. She knew everything in the same way as a child knows its mother's breast and that it is to drink from it. 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, Pg. 77.)

Anne Catherine's visions impel us to ponder on how God works, choosing the most humble for His greatest works, and how all things work together toward His plan, His purpose; even when our free wills or the evil one assaults that plan, God always protects it and brings it to fruition. There are no accidents with God. Everything is called into the unifying action of **His Will**, which is always circular, beginning and ending in Himself. Anne Catherine describes God's plan of salvation as a "circle of light" in which all things are held and merge, one piece into another, like a collage of glory until it is brought to completion in God's good time.

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1: 1-6.)

Does not the message of **Our Lady of America®** follow this same pattern? Has it not been led, "like all that is holy, by God's grace through many assaults and struggles?" Does not Our Lady's call to "**renew the face of the earth**" speak to the "**many pollutions and many cleansings depicted in the circle of light**" and which Our Lady addresses when she calls for an urgently needed "**reform of life**" if she is to hold back the arm of God's justice from falling upon a sinful generation? Do we not have Our Lady's promise that, in the end, all will go as she desires and she will change the hearts of those most opposed who will become her greatest advocates, for God will not be dictated to by man but man must surrender to the dictates of God? Does **Our Lady of America®** not speak to us of the need to empty ourselves so we can be filled? Does she not tell us the will of God must be dearer to us than all else? Does she not promise to take us to her Son if we would only come to her and learn from her great purity of heart? Does she not beg us to return to Faith and Purity so that we might know the redeeming grace of the Sacred Humanity, for she is His Mother and ours, and makes constant intercession for us with her King Son?

Perhaps greatest of all is her message of that Divine Indwelling that is the very presence of God within, a secret of such proportion that it will destroy Satan, a secret that is itself "**the circle of light**" unfolding its wonder in the depths of our inner beings where God dispels our darkness and merges us into His all encompassing Light. Let us

pause then to reflect on Our Lady's appearance as One suffused and transparent with the Light of God's glory shining within and about her. She is **the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God**, an image that fits so well with Anne Catherine's "circle of light" and the **picture of the ark or tabernacle inextricably bound to the holy name of "Mary."**

Our dear Mother showed herself to me in a special way around 11:30 on the morning of November 22. The next day, a Saturday, the experience was more detailed as more was shown me, or perhaps I had not noticed details the day before. This vision of herself is very important, as it reveals Our Lady as she really and truly was, the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God®.

Our Lady was standing on a globe, her right foot resting on a crescent or quarter moon, the left on the snout of a rather small and very ugly looking dragon. I saw fire come out of his huge jaws, but not very much, as he could not open them wide enough because of Our Lady's foot. At times he seemed to be somewhat black, again of a shade of green. Our Lady was all in white. Her veil was so long that it seemed to envelop the globe halfway. Sometimes the veil appeared so transparent that Our Lady's hair could be seen through it, and the hair seemed to be sparkling with the light of many glittering stars. At times the edges of the veil, sleeves, and garments seemed to be outlined in light. The veil was held about her head by a wreath of white roses. Her feet were bare.

The previous day Our Lady had appeared with her hands outstretched. At this second visit she slowly raised them, then crossed them on her breast rather close to her waist. While doing so, she bent her head slightly forward, and it seemed that her eyes were closed, not just lowered. On her breast, as though through a veil, the Triangle and the Eye, which is often depicted as the symbol of the Divine Indwelling, could be visibly seen. I said that Our Lady's feet were bare, that is, devoid of any kind of footwear, but on each foot was a large white rose. The roses, both on the feet and on the crown, were of such dazzling whiteness that the outlines of the petals could barely be seen, sometimes not at all. It seemed that a strong beam of light streamed from the Divine Presence within Our Lady onto the globe at her feet. Then halfway around the figure of Our Lady above her head appeared a scroll on which were written in letters of gold the words: "All the glory of the King's daughter is within."

Though it did not appear that her lips moved, yet I heard these words quite plainly: "I am Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling, handmaid of Him Who dwells within. ®"

She seemed suffused in a soft glow of light that appeared to come from within her. It seemed to permeate and, as it were, saturate her whole being, even her apparel and the roses.

(Sister Mildred (Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, OUR LADY OF AMERICA©, Fostoria, OH, Ps. 22-23. Account of November 22-23, 1957.

This theme of permeating light is seen again in Sister Mildred's following account.

As I hesitated to do Our Lady's bidding immediately because of certain doubts and fears concerning the reception of such a message Our Lady came to me again in the early morning hours of April 6, 1960 and after gently reproaching me for my lack of confidence, told me not to delay in sending you [the bishop] the words she had bade me write. Before leaving she said, "My children must know my desires." Our Lady put a strong emphasis on these last words. In this latter vision, contrary to her other appearances she was surrounded with so brilliant a light that her garments seemed to be made of a gold texture rather than white, or perhaps of a sparkling hue of white intermingled with a glitter of gold. I don't know how to describe this brilliance in any other way.

In the **Prayer to the Immaculate Conception** that is essential to this message of **Our Lady of America®** we see so many of Anne Catherine Emmerich's themes of battle, darkness, light, purity, redemption and salvation, tabernacle and grace, the beast for evil, the Trinity, and the angels.

O Immaculate Mother, Queen of our Country, open our hearts, our homes, and our Land to the coming of Jesus, your Divine Son. With Him, reign over us, O heavenly Lady, so pure and so bright with the radiance of God's light shining in and about you. Be our Leader against the powers of evil set upon wresting the world of souls, redeemed at such a great cost by the suffering of your Son and of yourself, in union with Him, from that same Savior, Who loves us with infinite charity.

We gather about you, O chaste and holy Mother, Virgin Immaculate, patroness of our beloved land, determined to fight under your banner of holy purity against the wickedness that would make all the world an abyss of evil, without God and without your loving maternal care.

We consecrate our hearts, our homes, our Land to your Most Pure Heart, O great Queen, that the kingdom of your Son, our Redeemer and our God, may be firmly established in us.

We ask no special sign of you, sweet Mother, for we believe in your great love for us, and we place in you our entire confidence. We promise to honor you by faith, love, and the purity of our lives according to your desire.

Reign over us, then, O Virgin Immaculate, with your Son Jesus Christ. May His Divine Heart and your most chaste Heart be ever enthroned and glorified among us. Use us, your children of America, as your instruments in bringing peace among men and nations. Work your miracles of grace in us, so that we may be a glory to the Blessed Trinity, Who created, redeemed, and sanctifies us.

May your valiant Spouse, St. Joseph, with the holy Angels and Saints, assist you and us in “renewing the face of the earth.” Then when our work is over, come, Holy Immaculate Mother, and as our Victorious Queen, lead us to the eternal kingdom, where your Son reigns forever as King. Amen.

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

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