

# These Supernatural Happenings...

*as Father Paul F. Leibold called them.*

About 1938 she [Sister Mildred Neuzil] began to have what seemed like mystical experiences. They may be described as flights of the spirit, interior locutions, etc. ...These supernatural happenings ... included many things that concerned only her own personal spiritual life: special espousals with Christ, designation as the Little White Dove, etc. Again during all this time there were no external signs that she was different from any other member of the Community.

After some years she began to write down briefly the happenings during these occasions of special communication with God. These were read by one or the other priests to whom she had gone for direction, and in general they never found in them anything contrary to faith and morals, nor anything to indicate mental debility. On the contrary, some points, especially the great emphasis on the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity, showed a theological understanding beyond what this sister had been able to obtain from her regular courses in Religion.

These words are part of the Introduction written by Father Paul F. Leibold, Sister Mildred Mary Neuzil's spiritual director, for her personal diary which he had her call **OUR LADY OF AMERICA**. A recent study of the Diary and Sister Mildred's life raised the question whether her experiences were supernatural, even though her spiritual director, a priest, later a bishop and then archbishop, referred to them as such.



**LOCUTIONS: What they are and examples from the Diary.** Locutions are the way in which God, if He chooses to do so, communicates with the soul. They are a form of private revelation, similar to an apparition, but rather than being seen a locution is heard or received internally. There have been "private revelations" throughout the ages, some recognized by the Church, but they do not belong to the deposit of Faith and cannot add to nor improve nor contradict anything that is part of Christ's definitive revelation. Their sole purpose is to help believers live a fuller Christian life. <https://www.catholic.com/qa/what-is-a-locution> A locution may be further described as a supernatural communication to the ear, imagination, or directly to the intellect. The locution is supernatural in the manner of communication, that is, beyond the ordinary laws of nature. Some seem to come from without; others from the innermost depths of the soul; others from its higher part; while others, again are so completely outside the soul that they can be heard with the ears, and seem to be uttered by a human voice. A locution from an evil spirit lacks coherence or clarity, causes disquiet in the one receiving it, and produces an evil effect in those who listen to it. <https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/dictionary/index.cfm?id=34640> Sister begins her Diary saying **Jesus spoke to her** in the past and in the early 1940's made it known to her that her mission was to converge towards the sanctification of the family. **At various times, she clearly states that Jesus, Our Lady or St. Joseph spoke to her and this is by way of locutions.**

**THE DEPOSIT OF FAITH: What is it?** The deposit of Faith is the body of revealed truth in Scripture and Tradition that is proposed by the Roman Catholic Church for belief by the faithful. It is public revelation and ended with the death of the last apostle.

**ILLUMINATIONS: What are they?** Today we hear so much about the "illumination of conscience" from various private revelations, e.g., describing them as a final act of God's

mercy when all will see the state of their souls as they stand in the sight of God, so those not in the state of grace might repent before the day of judgement. In regard to Sister Mildred and the Christian life, illuminations may be seen as the inspirations of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis, convicting us of sin in our lives and moving us toward that reform of life that is sanctification from within, restoring, if it has been lost, that sanctifying grace that is the Divine Indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in the soul. Special illuminations are those particular divine inspirations or understandings that move a chosen soul to do something God wills for His own purpose. God enlightens the mind and speaks to the heart of those attuned to His Voice who seek to do His Will in all things. An example from the Diary: **On October 5, 1956, I felt suddenly urged to write a prayer to Our Lady, Patroness of our land. I knelt by the little table in my room, and as I did so Our Lady came to me. She stood at my right side very close to me. Though I did not hear any words, the thoughts came into my mind one after the other, and I wrote without stopping until the prayer was finished.** This may be seen as an apparition of Our Lady at her side, an interior locution with words communicated directly to Sister's mind, and as an illumination or sudden compelling urgency to write this prayer. (Diary, Pg. 13.)

**Apparitions: Unlike locutions they are seen rather than heard.** An apparition is the corporeal appearance of a holy person, usually the Virgin Mary, to a faithful person. In 1954, on page 7 of her Diary, Sister describes vividly **the apparition of the Archangel Michael** with the palm and the sword, addressing the struggle of the saints to conquer themselves, the world and the devil. In 1955, **Sister describes her experience differently, perhaps more like St. Joseph's dreams, like being in a half-sleeping and half-waking state, as though being in two worlds.** She sees the Archangel Gabriel who tells her to go to Jesus' Mother to learn great purity of heart. She says: **"I awakened gradually. The image of the Angel was so**



**impressed upon my mind that he was as a living person beside me."** (Diary, Pg. 9.) On the eve of the North American martyrs Sister says **she felt the presence, rather than saw, Our Lady of Lourdes,** and Our Lady confirmed her identity as such. Sister did see part of her white gown and blue sash. Our Lady of Lourdes promised: **"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."** (Diary, Pg. 9.) But, the September 26, 1956 appearance of Our Lady as Our Lady of America most assuredly was an apparition. Sister said **Our Lady appeared before me;** Sister described Our Lady's appearance in great detail, her clothing, the crown, the lily, the brooch, the color of her eyes and

hair, her very youthful look, that beautiful smile on her face and the position of her hands. While Mass had ended and others may have been around, there is no mention of others seeing Our Lady. But then, at Lourdes, no one saw The Lady but Bernadette. At Fatima, the people did not see the beautiful Lady but felt the wind and saw the bush on which she stood move. Of course, in both of those apparitions, Our Lady worked tangible miracles so the people would believe-- the healing spring and the spinning sun. **Our Lady of America desires to work greater miracles than those of the body, miracles of Faith in the soul. Is there any greater miracle than the sanctifying presence of the Most Holy Trinity dwelling in the human soul?**



On November 22-23, 1957, Sister states that **Our Lady showed herself to me in a special way**. The following day Sister says that **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. Again, the details of her appearance are exquisitely recorded. (Diary, Pgs. 22-23.) St. Joseph came as was promised on the eve of March 19, 1958, and spoke of his spiritual fatherhood to God’s children, his obedience to the Divine Will, and said: **“Fatherhood is from God, and it must take once again its rightful place among men.”** (Diary, Pgs. 26-27.) **St. Joseph showed**

*Copyright 2012* himself to Sister in his glory, a vision she records with a sense of awe. He spoke of First Wednesday devotion--**“Thus should he be honored whom the King desires to honor.”** --and of his role as protector of the Church and the home. (Diary, Pgs. 29-30.) On March 30, 1958, **St. Joseph appeared with Mary and Jesus as a teenager** of fifteen or sixteen years of age and spoke of the Divine Indwelling and the sanctification of the family. Thus, we see over and over the intertwining of both locutions and apparitions of these holy people to Sister Mildred Neuzil. In 1981, Sister would be given the privileged appearances of the angel guardian of the United States and the archangel guardian of America, visions again related in minute detail.

**FLIGHT OF THE SPIRIT: How God elevates the soul.**

St. Teresa of Avila describes this rare gift of God to chosen souls in chapter 5 of THE INTERIOR CASTLE as a form of rapture in which the soul suddenly feels so rapid a sense of motion that the spirit appears to hurry it away with a speed which is very alarming, especially at first. The soul on whom God bestows this favour requires strong courage, besides great faith, trust, and resignation, so that God may do what He chooses with it. The soul appears to have quitted the body, which however is not lifeless, and the person is not dead, yet for a few seconds she cannot tell if her spirit remains within her body or not. She feels that she has been wholly transported into another and very different region from that in which she lives. An unearthly light and wonders are shown that cannot be described. In an instant her mind learns so many things at once that if the imagination and intellect spent years in striving to enumerate them, it could not recall a thousandth part of them. This vision is not intellectual but imaginary and is seen by the eyes of the soul more clearly than earthly things are seen by our bodily eyes. Although no words are pronounced, the spirit is taught many truths; for instance, if it beholds any of the saints, it knows them at once as well as if one were intimately acquainted with them for many years. <https://sacred-texts.com/chr/tic/tic22.htm> Sister recounts such an experience to Father Leibold.



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**February 25<sup>th</sup>, I had another of those “experiences” of which you had already heard, Father, many times. Though I had not at that time been thinking of her, she suddenly appeared at my side. This person was none other than St. Bernadette. She did not come as a Sister, but as the little peasant girl who saw “the Lady.” I was transported somehow with her to the Lourdes Grotto in France. We stood a short distance away from it looking up into the niche, which was filled with light. In the midst of the brilliant light I**

saw “the Lady” so beautiful, so glowing as it were, in light that I could scarcely see the outline of her figure. It was brighter than any light I have ever seen. It was a light all heavenly and full of glory. I was transfixed.

Then suddenly the figure of Our Lady seemed to dissolve in the light but the brilliant light itself remained. Then I saw a path; at times it seemed to take the form of steps leading upwards from the niche where “the Lady” had been standing. Ever so often as I gazed at this luminous pathway, I caught a glimpse of angels. I was anxious to follow the path of light and as I eagerly endeavored to do so, Bernadette held me back. Then I exclaimed, “But I want to go there.” The Saint answered, “No, my sister, it is not yet time for you, but it will be soon.” (Letter, Sr. Mildred Mary Neuzil to Father Paul Leibold, April 12, 1958.)

## **Divine Espousal: Sometimes called Mystical Marriage**

In the Old Testament God’s covenant with His Chosen People was spoken of as a marriage between Him and them, a bond of love. In the New Testament, the Church is seen as the Bride of Christ, His Mystical Body. In like manner, those who enter religious life and give themselves completely to Christ are spoken of as brides of Christ. <https://www.catholic.com/encyclopedia/mystical-marriage> In times past, young women taking final religious vows often dressed as brides before receiving the habit of the order they had joined. It is no surprise, then, to hear Jesus refer to Sister Mildred in those very endearing terms of “**Bride of My Heart.**” She lived that mystical union in an extraordinary way, as evidenced in the sufferings Jesus asked her to share in with Him.

An August 16, 1956 letter to Father Paul Leibold addresses this divine espousal and the victimhood Jesus asked of the Bride of His Heart.

**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 14<sup>th</sup>, 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.”**

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Please pray the Litany to the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of souls. Also, please re-read Sister’s Diary watching for the words described in these clarifications of supernatural happenings.

<https://www.ourcatholicprayers.com/litany-of-the-sacred-heart.html>