

“I Will Be With You Wherever You Are!” *Jesus to Sister Mildred*

“I Will Always Be With You!” *Our Lady to Sister Mildred*



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 loves Me will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. (John 14:18-24.)

This Scripture passage sums up the universal call to holiness for every disciple of Jesus, a life of intimacy with the Most Holy Trinity Who directs all Its action toward that infinite desire to dwell among us and within us. God sends us His Spirit to set us on fire with His love with which to love Him in return and to love one another as He has loved us. His Holy Spirit makes us bold, wise and fearless in fulfilling the Will of God for our lives. Our Lady experienced that love at the Annunciation when, at her “fiat,” Jesus took flesh within her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. St. Joseph experienced it when the Spirit stirred him out of his fears and dreams and into immediate action for the protection of God’s two most precious treasures, His Beloved Son and His Son’s Mother. We, too, live in the memory of this enormous love which aches deep within us, longing to be totally free and reunited with the One from Whom it came, the One Who made us for Himself, Who leaves us forever restless until we return to Him. The message of Our Lady of America is centered on these two realities, the heavenly Trinity and the earthly one, the Holy Family. It is God’s will that we come to Him by way of the Hypostatic Order of Grace, the Holy Family, the intimate collaborators with Christ’s redeeming grace into whose hands the peace of the world and each of us has been entrusted. The Divine Indwelling Presence is our peace, our happiness. Our Lady spoke thus to Sister Mildred Neuzil:

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. (Sr. Mildred Mary Neuzil, OUR LADY OF AMERICA, July 18, 1980, Page 37.)

We know from her Diary, her letters and her life that Sister Mildred Neuzil lived in a most intimate relationship with the Indwelling Trinity, “the Guest within” as she referred

to it, and with the Holy Family. Her life was essentially a call to contemplation, solitude, transformative prayer and penance in reparation for sin, especially sins against the chaste virtue, and for the salvation of souls. She chose the better part. In a letter to her spiritual director over two years before Our Lady's first appearance, Sister expressed her deep desire to enter a cloister and, if plans for a cloistered branch within the active order did not materialize, she would seek entrance into one outside the order. **"Solitude, the cloister is a must for me, Father, at this last phase of my life. So, if my own community promises me this, I have no desire to go elsewhere, as it is not a different Order that I am seeking, only solitude.** (our emphasis) **The fact is I would prefer remaining a Sister of the Precious Blood."** (Letter to Father Leibold, March 2, 1954.)

As Sister's desire for the contemplative life increased, so did her mystical experiences, but they were not all sweetness and light. She wrote Father Leibold of periods of diabolical temptations and spiritual darkness that sometimes lasted for weeks and months. In one correspondence she described an attack from Satan: **It is as though two huge, horrible arms encircled themselves around me and like a monstrous vise kept tightening and tightening. I could help myself in no way except by prayer. So I cried out "Jesus!" The vise became tighter. I cried out in terror, "Jesus, Mary!" By this time the pressure, the pain became so unbearable I was gasping for breath, but I managed to cry out one last prayer—"Jesus, Mary, Joseph!"** Suddenly, the pain stopped. What glory and protection in those **three** holy names, the **three** sacred Hearts of the Hypostatic Order of Grace! When she opened her eyes to the darkness, it held no more terror for the Phantom of Evil had fled. She was left with a profound sense of peace that never left her. When meeting Sister in person, it was this awesome sense of peace that was most striking about her. Such serenity and grace! That same letter further describes a new dimension to her mission beyond the renewal of the family through imitation of the Holy Family, and beyond sanctification from within through the Indwelling Presence of God. Reparation!

Our Lord has since told me that one special part of my "mission" was to make reparation for sins against the chaste virtue. He said that to do this I would have to suffer these "attacks" off and on, all through my life. He asked if I were willing. I shuddered, Father, but how could I refuse Him? He is so good; besides, His grace would always be there to help me. But it is a cause of much suffering to me and mental distress. I never know when these "attacks" will come, so can do nothing but pray. These attacks usually last only a few moments or minutes, sometimes longer, but they always seem to last such a long time and I am always in dread of them. (Letter to Father Leibold, date unknown.)

With the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, Father Leibold counseled sister that God, in directing souls to more intimate union with Himself, often plunges them into total darkness, loss of consolation, and the inability to meditate or pray. There may also be external crosses—misunderstandings from superiors or equals, jealousy and false accusations, or a feeling of being lost forever. The hardest sufferings to bear are those which come from one's own religious sisters. He told her that God loves us as much in the darkness as when the sun is shining, but we love more purely when the sun is **not** shining because we love it for its own goodness. Such sufferings identify us more acutely with the sufferings of Jesus and His most holy Mother. (Letter of Bishop Paul Leibold, October 20, 1954.)

On June 4, 1956, the anniversary of her perpetual union with Jesus, He again appeared and asked her if she would be willing to suffer all things to give Him to souls.



When she said “yes,” 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?”** She could not refuse Jesus anything. She always said “yes” to Him. She was the bride of His Heart.

Soon after, she was assigned to Rome City, Indiana for the second time (she had been there in 1947), but she had a terrible foreboding about the place and did not wish to stay there. She asked to leave but when she could not find someone to take her place, she put her trust in God to work all things to good and resigned herself to staying. Our Lord assured her, **“I will be with you wherever you are, spouse of My Heart. You have nothing to fear.”** This was after she had said to Jesus, **“Dear Lord, what are You doing to me?”** She would endure another frightening attack from Satan there.

E. Michael Jones, editor of Fidelity magazine, recounts his interview with Sister Mildred regarding this second assignment to Rome City, Indiana in his 12/83 edition.

Sister Mildred had just recently been transferred to the water cure staffed by her order of nuns in Indiana to wait on tables but had not been happy about the move. When she got to her room, she felt, as she said later, “like jumping out of the window.” She left her room that night and went to the chapel, but the feeling did not leave her. “It seemed to me,” she said, “like I was in a ring of evil. I couldn’t get out of it, and it was telling me to get out of there.” One night she awoke with the sense that something was perched on her pillow a little behind her head. Before she could discern just what it was, she felt it grab her face across the eyes and pull down on them. “Like this,” she said, and made a motion which implied that whatever it was had claws. She found no marks on her face afterward though. The next day she went to her superior and asked to be transferred back to Ligonier. She could have gone if she had found someone to wait on tables in her stead, but couldn’t and so didn’t, and as a result had her first encounter with the Blessed Mother instead. (Shortly after, on September 26, 1956, Our Lady’s visits as Our Lady of America began.)

In 1958 Sister was finally allowed to enter the cloister newly established within the active order at Our Lady of Nativity Convent in New Riegel, Ohio, the first permanent settlement of the Sisters of the Precious Blood here in America. She wrote her spiritual director, now Bishop Leibold, how much more relaxed she was at being able to do more of the things suited to her talents and abilities there.

“You know, Bishop, that all my religious life, except the few years teaching, ...I was always placed in positions in which the talents at which I was most adept could seldom, if ever, be put to use; this continued going against myself in the performance of tasks in which I did not feel capable or especially interested because of contrary leanings, though it built in me a strength that nothing has been able to weaken, had taken its toll on me, physically. I know that grace upheld me, otherwise a complete breakdown would have certainly been the result. When looking back on the last years especially, I can see clearly how the strength of the Divine Presence supported me. ...The above statement, Bishop, is in no way a complaint directed toward Authority. God willed and permitted me to come by the way I did because it was very necessary that I be detached and despoiled of everything, talents included. I never really felt any resentment, and now only a deep profound peace. (Letter to Bishop Leibold, September 1958.)

On October 1, 1961, Sister took a short rest and fell into a trance like sleep. Suddenly, Our Lady appeared at the foot of her bed, then clasped Sister’s folded hands into hers and said: **“I will always be with you. I will help you whenever you are in need.”** In an August 11, 1969 letter to Sister Florecita, foundress of the cloister, Sister Mildred says

she knew Sister Florecita believed in her and she felt impelled to share a message from Our Lady with her.

Sunday evening I felt her presence so strongly that I had no doubts whatsoever that she was at my side. Whenever I get this sensation of her presence, it is so strong and so deep that it is impossible for me to have any doubts about it. This morning, Monday, before I woke, she came to me as she always does when she comes, dressed all in pure white, and holding out her hand she said, "Do not be afraid. We will walk together to the Father's house." [our emphasis] Sister, by this I came to understand that she not only meant me but the cloister. I am certain of it. That is why I am no longer worried about what will happen to us. Our Lady is and will be with us in a very special way to help us with any needs and problems that may confront us. I thought this might be a comfort to you.



Sister Florecita and Sister Mildred

My dearest and best of friends, I hope that you will, after reading the above, continue to believe in me and not push me off as someone who imagines things. Truly this isn't so. God bless you, always. Faithfully, Sister Ephrem (Mildred Marie).

As we celebrate Mother's Day, the month of Mary, Mother of the Church and our Mother, we can learn from Sister's life that the way to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is through the merciful, Immaculate Heart of His Mother, trusting that she will walk with us, too, together to the Father's house. No matter where God's will for our lives will take us, we will not be afraid for His grace will protect us. As we celebrate Christ's Ascension and return to His heavenly Father, we rejoice in His sending us a new Advocate, their Holy Spirit, Who will explain to us the whole Christian economy of grace and who will be with us until the end of time when all things will be taken up into heaven, redeemed and glorified. As we celebrate Pentecost, may we be set on fire with the love of God and be bold witnesses to His Truth to the ends of the earth, ready to be crucified with Christ as a sacrifice of praise to the glory of the Father, a "Laudem gloriae."

O Life, O Beatitude, O Heaven, You only delight of the soul. You Who reach down from Your high, celestial throne to gather unto Yourself the little ones of this earth, and in recompense for the slight sufferings they bear out of love for You, give them Yourself. Look down, I beseech You, upon this, the smallest of Your small ones, and have compassion on my extreme weakness and frailty, known even more to You than to myself and make me entirely Yours. (Sister's Prayer, Trinity Sunday, 1977.)

"The Indwelling of God in the souls of men is the heart of the redemption. Your mission is for the total world." (St. Michael to Sister, September 1977.)

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"The will of God will never take you where the grace of God will not protect you!"