

OUR LADY of AMERICA and the Importance of Sister Mary Ephrem



It was on the eve of the Feast of the North American Martyrs, September 25, 1956, that Our Lady first appeared to Sister Mary Ephrem, in the Our Lady Mother of Mercy Chapel, Rome City, Indiana: *“I am Our Lady of America. I desire that My children honor Me, especially by the purity of their lives.”*

This message is the beginning of the many Apparitions of Our Lady of America to Sr. Mary Ephrem. Historically, Our Lady has appeared to chosen souls with a Message and/or a Mission. The Messages were for the Church and the world, often extending throughout time. As Our Lady of Guadalupe brought about the end of human sacrifice and the conversion of millions in Mexico, She is honored and invoked to this day, especially in defense of life.

Our Lady of Good Success, Our Lady of Akita, Our Lady of LaSalette and Our Blessed Mother’s so many other apparitions are always of highest importance. In the year 1917 Our Lady appeared to three shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal. In addition to the call to repentance and conversion, Our Lady of Fatima requested the consecration of Russia to Her Immaculate Heart by the Holy Father and Bishops united with him. The fulfillment of this Heavenly Request is debatable.

In the second appearance of Our Lady of America, She confirmed Her Identity as that which the U.S. Bishops declared and which was ratified by the Holy See, as She proclaimed:

“I am the Immaculate One, Patroness of your land. Be My faithful children as I have been your Faithful Mother...It is the United States that is to lead the world to Peace, the Peace of Christ, the Peace that He brought with Him from Heaven.”

The Roman Catholic Church and all the world are clearly under attack, for as scripture states,

“For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places” (Ephesians 6:12).

Quoting St. John Paul II,

“After my election as Pope, as I became more involved in the problems of the Universal Church, I came to have a similar conviction: On this universal level, if victory comes it will be brought by Mary. Christ will Conquer through Her, because He wants the Church’s victories now and in the future to be linked to Her.” (Crossing the Threshold of Hope, pp. 220-221).

With this, the apparitions of Our Lady of America, The Immaculate Virgin, spanning over twenty-four years to a Roman Catholic cloistered nun from the United States, may be the culmination of all. Ordinarily, Our Lady Appears to chosen souls in one way or another, yet, Our Lady of America is showing us something very different. She has appeared to Sister at least twelve different ways. The following are from various letters and notes of Sister Mary Ephrem, usually to her confessor, though not in chronological order, nor do they imply only twelve apparitions.

The first Apparition was in Rome City, Indiana, Our Lady appeared saying,

“I am Our Lady of America, I desire that My children honor Me especially by the purity of their lives.”

The additional Ways Our Lady appeared included:

“Our Lady of Perpetual Help,” “Our Lady Surrounded by Legions of Angels,” “Mother of Sorrows,” “Our Lady of Grace,” “Our Lady of Mount Carmel,” “Mother of Mercy,” “The Queen of Heaven,” “Our Lady, the Immaculate Tabernacle of the Indwelling God,” “The Lady” (the Immaculate Conception), “Our Lady of Precious Blood,” and “The Holy Family”.

From the Cross of our Salvation Our Lord Jesus Christ gave His Mother to be our Mother and Mother of the Church. She has been Guiding and Church and Her children, individually and collectively along the Path of the Holy Will of Her Son. In these times, most troublesome for the Church, for families, for all, Our Lady of America has said,

“I come to you, O children of America, as a last resort. I plead with you to listen to My Voice. Cleanse your souls in the Precious Blood of My Son. Live in His Heart, and take Me in that I may teach you to live in great purity of heart which is so pleasing to God. Be My army of chaste soldiers, ready to fight to the death to preserve the purity of your souls. I am the Immaculate One, Patroness of your land. Be My faithful children as I have been your Faithful Mother.”

Could it be that a future Pope will come from this Heavenly Work of Our Lady of America, and will he, along with Bishops united with him, consecrate Russia to Her Immaculate Heart? She did say to Servant of God Lucia dos Santo at Fatima on July 13, 1917,

“...In the end, My Immaculate Heart will Triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to Me, which will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world.”

On May 19, 2017 at the Rome Life Forum, it was His Eminence Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, who said,

“Certainly, Pope John Paul II consecrated the world, including Russia, to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on March 25, 1984. But, today, once again, we hear the call of Our Lady of Fatima

to consecrate Russia to her Immaculate Heart, in accord with her explicit instruction” (<http://fsspx.news/en/news-events/news/cardinal-burke>).

On May 31, 2007, then Archbishop of St. Louis, Cardinal Burke distributed letters to all Bishops of the United States promoting and defending the authenticity of the apparitions and messages of Our Lady of America:

“Having reviewed the correspondence between Sister Mary Ephrem and her spiritual director of many years, Monsignor Paul F. Leibold, Vicar General of the archdiocese of Cincinnati, who later became the Bishop of Evansville and, then, Archbishop of Cincinnati, it is clear that the devotion, as proposed by Sister Mary Ephrem, received his approbation... What can be concluded canonically is that the devotion was both approved by Archbishop Leibold and, what is more, was actively promoted by him. In addition, over the years, other Bishops have approved the devotion and have participated in public devotion to the Mother of God, under the title of Our Lady of America” (<https://www.romancatholicman.com/cardinal-burkes-letter-to-the-usccb-on-our-lady-of-america/>).

In 2005 the then, Archbishop Burke and Bishop Ricken asked two faithful souls, Al Langsenkamp and Kevin McCarthy, of the BVM Foundation, to help this devotion that had fallen into dormancy and to “get it going”. They started collaborating with a woman who claimed to be a Sister Mary Joseph Therese, C.I.T. who actually was Patricia Fuller from Fostoria, OH. She was at that time in the cloister of the Precious Blood Sisters with the visionary, Sister Mary Ephrem. In the late 70’s the Precious Blood Sisters closed the cloister and the visionary left the Order. Patricia Fuller tried to represent a new Order called the Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity, that she and the visionary went to after leaving the Cloister. She claimed copyrights and trademarks concerning the messages and devotionals. Patricia Fuller misrepresented her status and in essence who she was. This caused a serious threat to the devotion (<https://onemoresoul.com/uncategorized/our-lady-of-america-trial%e2%80%8f-update.html>). Soon it became a clear need to liberate the ‘Our Lady of America’ title and devotion, which resulted in a lengthy, legal battle. This has since been accomplished and new efforts have been launched in the United States towards the fulfillment of Our Lady’s Wishes, as well as a clearing of the name of the visionary herself.

The significance of Sr. Mary Ephrem and the hardships she bore must not be discounted. For Our Lord Jesus Himself said to Sister Mary Ephrem,

“...through you a great work will be accomplished. I AM the Great Sculptor of souls. With hammer and chisel I form them that they may glorify My Father by their beauty and perfection. Be pliant in My Hands, oh My two lowly ones, My priest and My little white dove, and then will you be formed into My likeness and through you, I will be formed in souls.” (Letter from Sr. Mary Ephrem to her confessor Arb. +Paul Leibold 2/20/54).

Our Lord and Our Lady have been preparing the Church and the world to have souls recognize and possess the Divine Indwelling. It was to this chosen soul, Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred Marie Neuzil) that the Messages and Mission of making known the Divine Indwelling has been entrusted. Our Lady of America told Sister:

“I am indeed the Mother of Sorrows, and it is My children who pierce My Heart. Their lives are filled with vanity and selfishness. They love My Son with their lips but not in their hearts. They refuse to follow Me and My Son along the Way of the Cross, because they have no love.

Love gives, love does not count the cost. But for most souls, love asks too much. They are willing to receive, in abundance, but they will not give. A full heart cannot receive love. It must first be emptied. It must give all, then it will receive all. Oh My children, give Me your hearts, emptied of all self-seeking and sinful pleasures, and I will fill it with Divine Love. I will give you Jesus, to hold in your hearts. He will fill it and then, Jesus will Live in you and Work through you for the Glory of His Father. Oh My children turn your Mother's Sorrow into Joy. Take the Sword out of My Wounded Heart by doing what I Ask. I Seek only the Glory of My Son and your greater good. Listen to your Mother's Voice and be the Consolation of My Immaculate Heart” (Letter from Sr. to her confessor Arb. +Leibold, 04/25/57).



The chosen soul

Who is Sister Mary Ephrem, of whom The Immaculate Virgin said,

“My poor child, you have suffered much, but do not fear. Take courage, for soon a haven of rest will be given you - not a refuge from suffering and pain, but a nest of solitude for the little white dove, so dear to Me and the Heart of My Son”?

And again,

“O My sweet child, when will My desires be realized? My Immaculate Heart desires with great desire to see the Kingdom of Jesus My Son established in all hearts. Now I have pleaded with My children to open their hearts to Him, but most are cold and indifferent. Has ever a mother shown more love and interest in her children's welfare than I have done? O My little one, daughter of My Pure Heart, you must pray with greater fervor and offer yourself with greater love to the Heart of My Son. My Heart, My Immaculate Heart, is the Channel through which the Graces of the Sacred Heart are given to men.” (Our Lady on the morning of Feb. 3, 1957).

Additionally, Our Lord Jesus spoke on March 6, 1957:

“...Let My Love, surrounding you and filling you, draw souls to Me in great multitudes. Such is My Will, oh My beloved one. Open then your heart that I may pour into it without ceasing, the Sweet Waters of My Undying and Saving Charity. For it is from this Fountain of Life, which Springs forth from My Divine Heart that men will receive Eternal Life. It was to obtain this for them that I Lived, Suffered and Died.”

Mildred Marie Neuzil was born on the Feast of Our Lady, Queen of the Angels August 2, 1916. She was born of Austrian parents, John and Anna Neuzil, in Brooklyn, NY, baptized at Most Holy Trinity, and shortly after moved to Cleveland Ohio. At the age of 14, Mildred entered the active religious congregation of the Sisters of the Precious Blood, a Papal Community, in Dayton Ohio. Three years later Mildred made her first vows as a professed religious. She received the name Sister Mary Ephrem, a name that means “doubly fruitful”.

She carried out her duties mostly in domestic work and as a kindergarten teacher. In 1937, when she was sent to the Chancery in Cincinnati, Ohio, it was there that God gave her a holy man, priest and later Archbishop to guide her, Rev. Paul Francis Leibold (<http://www.mysticsofthechurch.com/2016/06/sr-mildred-mary-ephrem-neuzil-and-our.html>).

Sister’s littleness is evident throughout her letters, yet her spiritual understanding was as clear as the mission she was entrusted with. In a letter to Arb. +Leibold (6/22/59), she stated,

“I will try, in my poor way, to explain as briefly as possible, the union that exists between the apparitions and the ultimate goal towards which they all converge, namely, the sanctification of the family through imitation of the Holy Family’s constant awareness and adoration of the Divine Indwelling Presence. It is quite simple, but if one is not conscious of the main point it can be confusing.

First of all it is necessary that we lead pure and mortified lives if we expect the Divine Presence to be fruitful in us.

Secondly, in order to help us lead such a life, we must become more and more conscious of this Divine Presence dwelling in our souls in order to sanctify our living.

Thirdly, we could have no holier or more perfect an example to follow than the one God Himself has given to us, namely, the Holy Family.

Now in order to remind us of the first condition, that of purity and penance, Mary shows us Her Heart encircled by the red roses of suffering and holding in Her right hand a lily, the symbol of purity.

The second condition requires a different reminder, so Mary presents herself as Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling. In this way she would impress upon our minds the importance of this Doctrine of Holy Church that we may realize Its need in the sanctification of our lives. The third condition brings before us the Holy Family through whose imitation all families, religious and secular, are to be sanctified. Purity, penance and constant awareness of the Divine Indwelling Presence, this was the Life of the Holy Family and it is the life we too must lead if we desire to attain to union with God. That the Angels should interest themselves in this work of renewal should not be astonishing for they are ever on the alert to further the cause of God and His Church.”

Our Lady to Sr. Mary Ephrem:

“My little daughter, take heed to the words of My Son. In them is contained that Eternal Wisdom which is learned and obtained only through Him Who in deepest humility and abasement, became

My Son and your Brother. At the foot of the Cross, My sweet child, through the Greatest Pain and Suffering, I Obtained for you and all mankind, in Union with My Dying Son, All the Graces Necessary for your Salvation and Sanctification. Think of this, my little one, and do not forget the Sorrows of your Mother” (Letter of Sister to her confessor 3/6/57).

The following can affirm the very essence of this little soul, (and even that of her confessor) whom Our Lady chose, as this was written before the apparitions: Letter from Arb. +Leibold to Sister, July 22, 1953:

“...given with a most humble admission of proneness to error, but assuredly given only after prayerful consideration. You know my field or talent, weak though it is, is surely not the direction of Sisters; in fact for the most part I suppose I am really afraid of them in a sense; dealing with sinners is the field I am familiar with, dealing with those in the higher life makes me feel like the little boy who just learned to keep his head above water and now finds himself alone in the water for the first time over his head. With that admission of incapability on my part-but with a willingness to do all and anything I can for you or any soul; if you wish to read on you may-if not, I am not easily hurt. Your attraction to the “Divine In Dwelling” is most attractive to me also. I have used it often in exhortations; as the basis of an appeal for purity as with St. Paul we consider the body as the vessel of the Holy Spirit. It impels the very Angels to kneel before the man in the state of Sanctifying Grace. A special devotion to this mystery since childhood (Sister’s special devotion) and the definite determination for seven years not to actually do something about it - surely all adds up to something more than a passing fancy or a temporary emotional attraction. I even checked all the orders of sisters I could, to see if there wasn’t surely one of them dedicated to this mystery; and could find none.” As well as this letter, in which Sister attests to herself, also before the apparitions:

“...My whole longing was to live a life of complete adoration in union with Christ. That which seems to take on the appearances of petition, is simply a desire to put on Christ, that my life of adoration may be the more perfect and thus give greater glory to the Most Holy Trinity” (Letter to her confessor 11/25/54).

And later, in a letter of Sister’s to Arb. +Karl J. Alter (1885-1997) written March 30, 1960:

“Your Excellency, often, so often I feel my inadequacy, my wretched unworthiness. More than once I suggested to Our Lady that she choose someone else, someone better fitted for so great a work. After one of her visits I said to her with deep compunction: “Oh Mother, I am not worthy.” She replied, “I do not come to the worthy, My child, but to the lowly and humble of heart.” So in the knowledge of my own nothingness, I am trying to do what I can. You may be sure that the more hidden I can be the happier it will make me. For if ever I long to remain lost in the shadows it is now. I have not the slightest desire to put myself forward in any way whatsoever. Such a procedure is most abhorrent to me. There is nothing I desire less.”

Sister Mary Ephrem’s confessor was the Archbishop of Cincinnati, Arb. +Paul F. Leibold, V.G. (1914-1972). He would remain her spiritual director for 32 years, from 1940-1972, when he died. January 25, 1963 he gave his Imprimatur on the Prayer to the Indwelling, and Daniel Palarczyk, S.T.D., his Nihil Obstat to the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity. He also arranged a meeting with Luigi Riamondi, the Apostolic Delegate from Washington, DC, Msgr. Boffa, and his personal secretary, Fr. Francis Lammeier, to present a small ivory statuette of Our Lady of America to the Holy See and the Catholic Church. Subsequently, this statuette was

presented to the Apostolic Delegate in August 1972 and is presumed to be in the Vatican Museum. Arb. +Leibold had decided to build a large, outdoor Shrine to Our Lady of America at the New Riegel, OH. Cloister property. That didn't happen due to his sudden, untimely death on June 1, 1972. The Archbishop was greatly loved and revered by his flock as evidenced by the overflowing crowd that attended his funeral. He is buried in Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Cincinnati.

Our Lady spoke February 12, 1958:

“My child, nothing is accomplished without pain. Prepare to suffer much. You see the sword in the Heart of your Mother. Suffering completed the work of Divine Grace in my soul. He who refuses to suffer will never abide in the Spirit of Christ, will never be formed into His image...My sweet child, the Father will never recognize a soul as His own unless He sees in it the likeness of His beloved Son. Souls must attain to the perfection of the Father through the Spirit of the Son...Beloved daughter, you wonder at the sword and the deep wound it has made in my Heart. It is the sword of grief plunged therein by my children who refuse to let me teach them the True Way. There is only one True Way to the Father, my child, only one Way to eternal union. It is the Way of the Divine humanity. It is through my Son, the Only-begotten of the Father, that souls attain perfect union with the Divinity, as perfect as human nature is capable of, aided by Divine Grace...But my children will not heed; they will not listen. Every other way they will take, but not this one...I ask greater sacrifices of the most favored and beloved of my children. I ask in the Name and for the love of my Son, Who so desires this...If I ask for reform of life, it is first from the chosen that I look for it. They must by the example of a sacrificial life lead the way for souls to union with Christ, honoring the Father by putting on His Spirit and His likeness in all things...O my small one, beloved of my Son's Heart, prepare yourself by prayer, penance, and suffering for what is to come...”

The sufferings of Sr. Mary Ephrem

Sister Mildred Mary Ephrem led a life of hidden sufferings which she accepted with love and great patience. With highest dedication to making known Our Lady of America and Her Messages for the Sanctification of souls, families, priests, and in particular Her children of the United States, Sister Mary Ephrem faced tremendous opposition. The resistance came directly from superiors, though in subtle ways, eventually to the closing of the Cloister. Without her persistence, courage and even the sacrifice of her vocation, the messages and mission may have been silenced. At this time in Church history Our Lady chooses a little one, to whom She said,

“I come to you, O children of America, as a last resort. I plead with you to listen to My Voice.” For us, Our Lady's Voice is Sister Mary Ephrem.

With precision, Sister Mary Ephrem pinpoints the sad situation of her final years with the Congregation of Sisters of Precious Blood, in a letter dated Jan. 31, 1981:

“...After 50 years of service to the Precious Blood Congregation I am now looked upon as a renegade and made to feel like an outcast. I don't deserve this kind of treatment and I do not intend a continuation of more of the same. The injustice that I have suffered at the hands of authority in and out of the Congregation has caused me much suffering. I don't deserve any of this either. I did not leave the contemplative Way of Life as lived at New Riegel voluntarily, I was forced out. My only crime, my determination to be faithful to my Contemplative vocation. To this

end I had made a Solemn Promise for life. Is it treason to be loyal to one's principles and beliefs? According to the diocese and the Congregation, yes. I live by a different standard and one thing at least no one can take from me and that is my integrity..."

Yet again in another letter to the Congregation dated June 4, 1982:

"...It surprises me that you have so little compassion or understanding concerning our desire to continue the Contemplative Way of Life. But you never went through the agonizing experience that we went through so I can't accuse you of being insensitive...Now here is my statement. We were told that we could try different ways to get something started so we could eventually seek approval. Some of the Bishops to whom we wrote were favorable and willing to give us a chance until they contacted the Superiors in Dayton of which you were one, that effectively stopped everything for us. You took away our good name and cut off any help we could have received...Yes, I have my integrity and will always have it. I don't know about that of those who are still down on us and will do anything to stop any effort on our part. By the way, the Bishops' letters would end like this, quote, "The closing of the Convent at New Riegel was an internal matter of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. My knowledge of the situation assures me that much prayer and deliberation went into the decision." End of quote.

Sister, if you had the courage to face it honestly you could never believe that the above quote was true. Because if it had been the situation of the Contemplative Sisters at New Riegel, it would never have been handled the way it was. The Holy Spirit never inspires such tactics. I was shocked! We even had guards spying on us. If I were living in a Communist Country I could understand that. But here, and by Religious Superiors? Our group at New Riegel was not perfect. No one is and it is not expected. We were more than willing, when asked, to be settled elsewhere by the Congregation to continue to live our Contemplative Way of life. But that wasn't really what was wanted, was it. We were never actually or literally accepted from the very beginning, just tolerated and that barely so. But at least former Mother Generals respected what we were trying to do and permitted us to go ahead without undo interference.

Not so under the regime before this one. Excuses, not reasons, were given to get rid of us as Contemplative Sisters and substitute in its place a house of prayer without so much as a discussion or a "by your leave". We were approved by Rome as was our Novitiate through Bishop Rehring. But that didn't make any difference did it. The Dayton Officials ran rough-shod over all of it and our statutes as well. Nothing was honored. Oh it was all covered up as being necessary and for our benefit, yet all the while we were wished out and gone...What I want to keep alive and fight for though in this Contemplative Institute of Prayer is the Contemplative Way of Life and Contemplative Prayer itself..."

In the late 1970's the Precious Blood Sisters closed the cloister and the visionary, along with two other sisters, left the Order. A new Order was founded, called the Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity, though not sanctioned by the Church; it proved to be their only option. Our Lady Spoke to Sr. Mary Ephrem, then Mildred Marie Neuzil (returning to her Baptismal name) on Aug. 14, 1980:

"Beloved daughter, you are not being accepted because you are a small one. But in the end all will come as I desire. Those who oppose you will receive light to understand. These good people mean well and if they are in authority it is for you to listen respectfully and obey. I will speak to them in their hearts and the Divine Spirit who makes all things clear will give them Wisdom and

Understanding. In the end they will do as I Wish. So have patience, dear one, it will happen as I have said and those who have opposed Me will become My most ardent and courageous supporters. Until this comes to pass, wait in trust, knowing that I never fail those who place their confidence in Me. My Son Blesses you, be at peace."

On the eve of each victory reported for Our Lady of America, Sister Mildred would suffer intense physical pains and many times battled spiritual attacks designed to discourage her from praying. For example, just before World Youth Day 1993, one night she suffered from terrible abdominal pain and the "old Boy" (her name for satan) suddenly appeared as his horrible real self, trying to entice her to:

"Just say that you made it all up and I promise you will not suffer any more pain." She stated, "If God required her life or suffering, so be it."

She reported on the "old Boy's" physical assaults and hateful glares. After World Youth Day her physical pain intensified with each victory; she was especially inflicted with the terrible crippling pain of osteoarthritis complicated by rheumatoid arthritis. Medical treatments to alleviate pain were negligible or made her suffering worse with the complications of side effects. She would hide her moans when people were near her. Certain points on her body radiated such excruciating pain that it was sometimes quietly wondered if she had the hidden stigmata. In 1994 she endured a broken hip which compounded her physical adversities. With crippling arthritis, a ruptured appendix and especially severe asthma, Sister's distresses were, at times, life threatening.

Her deteriorating condition pained all who saw her gnarled hands and body contorted into a near 45-degree angle before she died. She was often seen surrounded by Angels and loved to send people from her presence with *"may the Angels go with you!"*

(above excerpts: <http://www.mysticsofthechurch.com/2016/06/sr-mildred-mary-ephrem-neuzil-and-our.html>).

Promises of Our Lady through this chosen soul

CCC ²⁶ *God is "HE WHO IS", from Everlasting to Everlasting, and as such remains Ever Faithful to Himself and to His Promises.*

Heavenly Promises from the Mother of God through Sr. Mary Ephrem: *On April 4, 1960, a few minutes before one o'clock in the afternoon, Our Lady came to me with the request that I write down the following words as the expression of Her further desires and send them to Your Grace as quickly as possible: "Tell His Grace, My beloved son, that it is through the medal that he will receive the sign for which he asks. I ask him to have the medal struck and distributed everywhere, and he will receive not only the one sign for which he has asked, but many, so many that he will have cause to be greatly astonished...My child, God works often through little and humble things, and such instruments should never be despised but accepted and used with love and gratitude. It will be through the medal that God's Will shall be manifested and glorified and My desires carried out even to the very end...I place My confidence in My faithful sons, the Bishops, who will not fail to take up My Cause and make it bear much fruit for sanctification among so many and countless souls...Send this word to My beloved son, the Archbishop, and have no fear, sweet child, for I will keep My Promise, for I am the Ever Faithful Virgin"* (Letter of Sr. Mary Ephrem to Arb. +Alter - 4/13/60).

From Cardinal Burke's 2007 letter,

"In addition to the correspondence by which Monsignor Leibold declared the approval of the devotion, he also carried out the first of Our Lady of America's requests, made through Sister Mary Ephrem, namely, he had a medal struck with the image of Our Lady of America on one side and the coat of arms of the Christian family on the other."

In the same letter to Arb. +Alter:

Our Lady has asked that a statue be made as she appeared on the Sept. 26th, 1956. After being solemnly carried in procession to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Wash. D.C. She desires that there it be enshrined in the place of honor and to be venerated there, in a special way as 'Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin'. It is at this shrine there she has Promised to work wonders. She desires also that a small statue or picture of this same likeness be honored in every home.

Again, from Cardinal Burke's 2007 letter,

"A special request of Our Lady of America was that her statue be placed in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. There is a providential connection between Sister Mary Ephrem and the late Archbishop Bishop John Francis Noll of the Diocese of Fort Wayne, who is celebrated as the Apostle of the National Shrine. The principal apparitions of Our Lady of America to Sister Mary Ephrem took place in the chapel of the Precious Blood Sisters Convent in Kneipp Springs Sanitorium, near Rome City, Indiana. Archbishop Bishop Noll, who died 1956, maintained a summer residence at the Sanitorium, within a few hundred feet of the place of the apparitions. While the National Shrine is the largest shrine in the world at which there was not a previous apparition, the private revelation to Sister Mary Ephrem very much confirms the mission of the National Shrine."

Taken from Sr. Mary Ephrem's notes received 12/6/56 by Arb. +Leibold: *(Our Lady) Promises miracles of GRACE (not of body) in United States – (She said) "I desire that this be known."*

In another encounter with Our Lady, observed in a letter dated March, 1957, Sr. Mary Ephrem:

"Who are you?" She replied, "I am Our Lady of Perpetual Help. I will help you always." That was all, Father, yet it was an experience never forgotten. After that I never failed to implore her aid, under this Title, reminding her of the Promise she had made — to help me always. And Our Lady, you know, Father, wants to help all her children. She is most anxious to do so. But she will not force this help upon us. We must longingly ask for it and freely accept it."

Yet again, in a letter from Sister to Arb. +Leibold, Sept. 12, 1958:

"Our Lady came to me in a special way in the afternoon of Sept. 12th. She encouraged me and again assured me that she would keep her Promise. Almost always when Our Lady comes now it is as she appeared Sept. 26, 1956 (Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin). I feel her Presence with me all the time of course, but on these special occasions it is more manifest and the special vision accompanies it."

On the evening of the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary, October 7, 1957, Our Lady again appeared. Her hands were clasped in an attitude of prayer. Her look was serious, though her countenance retained its usual deep serenity. Hanging from her right hand was a blue rosary of a glass-like quality, I was conscious of the fact that what she was about to say to me was not only

very grave but of the utmost importance. Our Lady reiterated in a similar manner her first warnings:

"My beloved daughter, what I am about to tell you concerns in a particular way My children in America. Unless they do penance by mortification and self-denial and thus reform their lives, God will visit them with punishments hitherto unknown to them...My child, there will be peace, as has been Promised, but not until My children are purified and cleansed from defilement, and clothed thus with the White Garment of Grace, are made ready to receive this peace, so long Promised and so long held back because of the sins of men."

On another occasion, Feb. 22, 1972, Our Lady to Sister:

"When a picture or statue of Myself as Our Lady of America is placed in the home and honored there, then will My Son Bless His people with Peace. Believe in Me, dear child, believe in Me, My Love will never fail you."

Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred Marie Neuzil) should be recognized by the Church

Arb. +Paul F. Leibold maintained a necessary and heartfelt relationship with Sr. Mary Ephrem up to his death. He directed her, supported her, advised and befriended her. He believed wholeheartedly in the apparitions of Our Lady of America, fulfilling all that Our Lady asked of him as he could. So often behind a saint is a great confessor. Not only that, but the death of a cherished confessor usually leaves the soul more alone than ever. Such was the case with Sister Mary Ephrem.

Compare the story of Blessed Fr. Michael Sopocho, when in 1933, he met St. Maria Faustina (1905-1938), a humble nun with a tremendous weight upon her. The Lord had begun revealing to her His message of Divine Mercy, an urgent message that He wanted her to share with the whole world. But who would believe her? At first, no one. Not her superiors in the convent and not even her previous confessors.

An even greater similarity is that of the Servant of God Luisa Piccarreta, speaking of the death of her confessor St. Annibale Maria Di Francia, June 1, 1927, *"I had received the unexpected news of the death of Reverend Father Di Francia. He was the only one left to me, to whom I could open my poor soul. How well he could understand me – it was to a saint that I would entrust myself, who had very much comprehended all the value of what Jesus had told me about the Divine Will."*

Arb. +Leibold died in 1972 (his death occurred June 1, the same day as St. Annibale Maria Di Francia). Sr. Mary Ephrem left the Order several years later. Our Lord and Our Lady continued to communicate with her, with the final message given in the winter of 1984:

"What happens to the world depends upon those who are living in it. There must be much more good than evil prevailing in order to prevent the holocaust that is so near approaching. Yet I tell you, My daughter, that even should such a destruction happen because there were not enough souls who took My Warnings seriously, there will remain a remnant untouched by the chaos who, having been faithful in following Me and spreading My Warnings, will gradually inhabit the earth again with their dedicated and holy lives. These souls will renew the earth in the Power and Light of the Holy Spirit, and these faithful children of Mine will be under My Protection, and that of the Holy Angels, and they will partake of the Life of the Divine Trinity in

a most remarkable Way. Let My dear children know this, precious daughter, so that they will have no excuse if they fail to heed My Warnings.”

On January 10, 2000, the first year of the New Millennium, this humble, holy soul, Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred Marie) Neuzil, at age 83, was set free from the cross she had so willingly embraced for the cause of Our Lady of America. She was set free to receive her full communion with the Most Holy and Triune God that had dwelt so intimately within her while on earth. Her funeral Mass was celebrated at the Basilica of Our Lady of Consolation in Carey, OH by nephew Fr. Gregory Neuzil from Tennessee.

Friends from around the country, including niece Elaine Bratrovsky of Colorado, traveled to Carey that snowy winter day to bid her farewell, knowing they, too, had lived with and known another saint. The song to Our Lady of America, written by Sister Mary Ephrem and put to music by Richard Paul Rencher, was sung by Marty Rotella of the Divine Mercy and Life Foundation in New Jersey. Sister’s body, laid to rest in a handmade wood casket with Our Lady of America’s picture encased in the lid, is temporarily laid to rest in a vault at St. Wendolyn’s Cemetery, Fostoria, Ohio (<http://www.mysticsofthechurch.com/2016/06/sr-mildred-mary-ephrem-neuzil-and-our.html>).

Her beautiful soul expresses itself so well in this letter to her confessor, Nov. 12, 1954:

“We are each one, His paradise Father, and He takes so much delight in dwelling in us. How sad, Father, that so few souls know this. And of those who know, what a small number make use of it. What a mission is ours Father. To make souls conscious of God dwelling in them and live a life of continual adoration. There is so much to be done, and time is so short. Yet, what a consolation to know that even in Eternity we can continue this glorious work of love.”

In a letter dated June 4, 1982, Sister Mary Ephrem witnessed and prophesied:

“I am getting older so I can’t expect many more years to my life. But until I go I will spend myself in fighting for and defending the Contemplative Way of Life and Contemplative Prayer. And Contemplative Prayer, as you know, Sister, is for everyone. I will not live to see it but there will be born a Contemplative Community dedicated to the direct adoration of the Divine Indwelling Presence.”

How commonly the faithful recognize a saint before they are acknowledged as such by the Church. In the case (not yet a Cause within the Church) of Sister Mary Ephrem and that of her confessor, Arb. +Paul F. Leibold, we find two committed souls. Their dedication was to making known to the Church in the United States the Heavenly Mandate of Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin. While they continue this Mission from Heaven, only the faithful that remain on earth can complete Our Lady’s Wishes. The fulfillment of these Divine Wishes will likely prove to be the remedy for Holy Mother the Church in these troublesome times, and eventually peace in the world, as She Promised.

Our Lady of America told Sr. Mary Ephrem Neuzil that greater miracles than those granted at Lourdes and Fatima will be granted here in America if Our Lady’s requests are carried out by Her Bishops. Let us pray and make sacrifices that this may soon come to be.

Fiat!