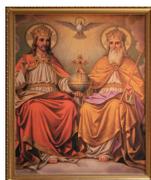




***The Armor of Faith***  
**Topic Summary: Our Lady of America**  
***Part III: Some History***



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## **Introduction**

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Helen is a lay-Dominican with a love for music ministry. The Dominicans, I always mention, are also known as the Order of Preachers. Sharon is still our token cradle Catholic on the team, and, as everyone knows by now, I am simply here to ask questions because it is much easier to ask them than to answer them. Hmmm, I guess I just exposed that I leave the hard work to the panel. To answer my questions, correct my pronunciation, and make sure I know which century I am talking about is why we have our panelists, so welcome to our panelists as well as to our listeners.

We are also joined by special guest panelist, Donna Mae. Donna Mae is the artist who sculpted the statue of Our Lady of America which was carried at the 1993 World Youth Day at Denver, Colorado. While Donna Mae did not personally meet with Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred) Neuzil, she did converse with Sister via phone and mail as Donna Mae sculpted the statue and therefore, Donna Mae became part of the history associated with Our Lady of America.

Donna Mae, welcome to our panel.

Let us open with a prayer:

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

Dear Lord, we also lift up the prayers in our prayer basket. You know what is written on each one and you know the hearts of those who offer their thanks and praise and their petitions for the blessings of Your great mercy.

Dear Lord, we pray especially today for the protection of our good shepherds, as well as an increase in their number. We pray You will grant them the wisdom, courage, strength, and good health by which they may bring Your Holy Truth to the children of Your creation.

We pray too, dear Lord, for vocations. We pray You will guide parents in how they may share with their children the vocations You have laid out before us. We pray You will touch young hearts so they may respond to the vocations to which You call them. And because we are in such desperate need, dear Lord, we pray You will raise up for us a multitude of religious and priests; priests and religious who will teach Your Holy Truth, who will do what is right and just and who will lead the people in all which is right and just so that hearts may be opened towards You and that Your will may be done.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray. Amen.

If you would like to add your prayers to our prayer basket, send us an email at [armoroffaithradio@gmail.com](mailto:armoroffaithradio@gmail.com). Please include the word “prayer” in the subject line so that we will give it priority and capture it for our prayer basket. Just so you know, Sharon and I lift up our prayers with those in the Armor of Faith Radio prayer basket during our daily prayers.

If you are a new listener, we want to let you know that you can listen to us on any internet device which has speakers or headphones, including your smartphone. In addition to [wcatradio.com/armoroffaith](http://wcatradio.com/armoroffaith), we are available through a number of streaming services, such as iHeart Radio, Spreaker, iTunes, and CastBox, among others. Data rates may apply, depending on your Internet access plan, but it is free from us. Simply search for “Armor of Faith Radio” and select the episode you desire. We will be happy to keep you company wherever you are and wherever you are waiting.

We would also like to ask your assistance in evangelization. By sharing the URL for our show, you can help us spread knowledge of our faith. All you need to do is share the URL, [wcatradio.com/armoroffaith](http://wcatradio.com/armoroffaith) via email or social media and tell family and friends as well. Several of the streaming services through which we are available on demand also have share options, so we invite you to join the evangelization and help us spread the good news of the Gospel and our faith in Jesus Christ. You can also help us by selecting the follow or subscribe option associated with the service through which you listen to our show.

### **Current Day Commentary:**

There are a lot in the headlines upon which I could comment this week, but despite pandemics and riots, my attention was drawn to what I consider to be a huge, although somewhat silent bombshell.

As I was preparing to end the day on 6 Jun 2020, the 76<sup>th</sup> anniversary of D-Day, something drew me to check social media, which usually I am too mentally exhausted to deal with at the

end of the day. I saw a post from an account I normally dismiss, but it said there was a letter of “biblical” proportions coming. It mentioned the name Vigano, which peaked my attention. I began to trace the thread and found a post with photos of what was presented to be an open letter from Archbishop Vigano to President Donald Trump.

The problem for me was that the letter was dated 7 Jun 2020, but in my time zone, my reference was 6 Jun 2020. Of course, it was clear to me that the Archbishop wanted the letter released on Trinity Sunday for a symbolic reason, but the distribution effort required that it be positioned for release on 6 Jun 2020, which to me, a military man, also carried a symbolic connection.

With all the misinformation and politically intentional disinformation presented on social media, I was skeptical that this might be a hoax of some sort, so I decided to trace things further. I was later to discover that the link I found in a nondescript post was put up by LifeSite News. Then I found a link to RemnantTV and a reading of the letter placed on YouTube®. By this time, it was 7 Jun 2020 in my timezone. As I watched links begin to appear across several conservative sites, I felt like I did when I used to watch history unfold in the war room in which I served in Germany when ever we began a deployment.

Of course, when units begin to move to engage, you must also look for movement of both allies and adversaries. Though I may have missed something in my searches, it is interesting to note the silence so far from Progressive outlets. That does not mean opposition it is not organizing and preparing, but it will be interesting to note when they begin to execute their strategy.

The next morning, I decided to Tweet out LifeSite's link to the letter with the following comment.



Archbishop Vigano's letter appeared to confirm what I began to notice on 13 Oct 2016, which I noted a couple of years later was the 99<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fatima. That was the date I began to connect what I knew from my military experience to historical threads and began to see that the same tactics engaged to attack the Constitution and the institutions of power of the United States of America were also engaged against the Catholic Church and for much longer than most people realize. I also began to notice that the efforts of institutional infiltration by Marxist-Progressive forces were not only present in our Church, but also in the institutions of strategic power in the United States to include our government, media, healthcare systems, academia, education, and commerce systems. It eventually led me to produce our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” episodes 57 – 68. I have observed so much more since then and we shall visit some of that as we prepare our upcoming series concerning “spiritual warfare.”

Archbishop Vigano wrote:

Although it may seem disconcerting, the opposing alignments I have described are also found in religious circles. There are faithful Shepherds who care for the flock of Christ, but there are also mercenary infidels who seek to scatter the flock and hand the sheep over to be devoured by ravenous wolves. It is not surprising that these mercenaries are allies of the children of darkness and hate the children of light: just as there is a deep state, there is also a deep church that betrays its duties and forswears its proper commitments before God. Thus the Invisible Enemy, whom good rulers fight against in public affairs, is also fought against by good shepherds in the ecclesiastical sphere. It is a spiritual battle...

As we mentioned during our series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” our intent by sounding the warning is not for the faithful to sleuth out the wolves who wear the clothing of sheep, but we must maintain our situational awareness. Knowledge, understanding and awareness of our faith is what will enable us to see the wolves and steer away from them. It is the responsibility of our good shepherds to reveal the wolves and remove the threat to the flock, but as the flock, it is our responsibility to listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd, through His faithful shepherds, so He may steer us away from danger. It is also our responsibility to follow His ways. We cannot do that if we are unaware of our faith. Hopefully, our show will help you in your studies and discernment.

I have mentioned before, our discernment of to what we are called is not about whether the right or left are right or wrong, it is about whether we understand what God asks of us. While Archbishop Vigano's letter was to President Trump, expressing Archbishop Vigano's observation of the spiritual warfare in front of us, the letter was open to the public for a reason. We must recognize it was also a call of the faithful to prayer, which I will talk about more next time.

## **Why Catholics Do What We Do:**

### ***Spring – Part VIII:***

Welcome back to our Spring cleaning of the soul. Today we move forward with the seventh commandment.

Exodus 20:15 reads:

*You shall not steal.*

Deuteronomy 5:19 says:

*You shall not steal.*

Today's traditional teaching is:

You shall not steal.

Here we have yet another commandment that says exactly the same thing from three different sources. This is also a commandment that sounds easy to understand as well. Let us follow some questions and find out if this is as easy as it sounds.

- Have I taken something that belonged to someone else?
- Have I stolen any object, shoplifted, or cheated another from their money?
- Have I knowingly deceived someone in business or committed fraud?
- Have I wasted time in relation to my work, school, or home responsibilities?
- Have I delayed in paying debts that I owe to another?
- Have I shown disrespect for the property of another person?
- Have I cheated someone from what is fairly theirs, like a creditor, an insurance company, a corporation, or anyone who provides fair services and value?
- Have I let money and property concerns take more importance over my duties to God, Church, my family or my own spiritual well-being?

Stealing is fairly easy to understand. It is taking away from someone else what is not rightfully our own. Interesting how this includes, not only property, but time, talent, and reputation as well. When we fail to be productive and attentive to our employer we are guilty of stealing from them as they pay us for the value we deliver. Of course, for employers, this is also about proper payment for value delivered by their employees. When we fail to be involved, attentive, and participatory with our families, we are guilty of stealing their love and not returning to them the love we owe them.

I don't know how all of these questions are relating to you, but I am finding that I really need to do a better examination of conscience. I thought I was doing a good job of reviewing my deeds both good and bad, but as we are going through this cleansing process, I find that I have missed some of the meanings behind the commandments. When I reach the pearly gates, I want to be able to meet Jesus and have a clear conscience about all that I have and have not done. I surely do not want to be caught having to explain sins that I ignored. Our beloved Church gives us so many chances to be absolved from the sins we commit and we need to avail ourselves of the opportunities to clean our souls as often as possible.

*Have a blessed week All. Remember, you are loved dearly by God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and yes, by us as well.*

If you would like to learn more about Spring Cleaning of the Soul and Examination of Conscience, we invite you to follow the links in the reference section of the topic summary for this show. You can obtain the topic summary by visiting <https://wcatradio.com/armoroffaithstudyguides/> and look for episode 150.

## Discussion:

As we concluded our discussion last time, I mentioned that when I placed the discussion of Our Lady of America on our schedule, it was prior to the issuance of Bishop Rhoades findings and guidance. I did not learn of the guidance until we started working on the possibility of obtaining guest panelists familiar with the history of Our Lady of America.

Being a military man, I know full well that no plan survives first contact. You know the old joke, if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans. With love of Our Lady in our hearts, I was all set to help raise awareness of the requests of Our Lady of America, but I also learned a lesson; we must be careful that what we do is truly what God asks of us and there is a reason Christ established the Church He built upon Peter.

In our zeal, we may find ourselves following what we believe to be truth, only to discover error. In our caution, we may be ignoring the desires and encouragement of Christ. We must remember, the Church is here to temper us so we do not scamper in the wrong direction. We must also remember, Satan doesn't care how we miss the mark of what God asks of us, whether it is to the left or right; only that we do. So, we will proceed with our examination and keep in mind the instruction of Bishop Rhoades; that this is a matter of private devotion based upon the subjective inner religious experiences of Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred) Neuzil and not an apparition approved by the Church. This could change, depending on the information available to the Church and their investigation, but we do not want to get ahead of the ecclesiastical authority of the Church.

Before we examine Sister Mary Ephrem's accounts, we want to spend some time with the history.

From the OurLadyofAmerica.com website, the story begins with the following account.

The story of Our Lady of America truly began on May 10, 1846 when one Archbishop and 22 US Bishops met in Baltimore, MD, the first Catholic diocese in the US, for the 6th Provincial Council of Baltimore. On that date they petitioned Rome to have the Blessed Virgin, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, named as Patroness of these United States, 28 [states] at the time. In 1847 that petition was granted by Pope Pius IX and Mary, under the title of her Immaculate Conception, became Patroness of the US.

It was not until eight years later, on December 8, 1854, that Pope Pius IX would define the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in his Apostolic Constitution, *Ineffabilis Deus*. Less than four years later, on the feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1858, Our Lady would confirm that dogma by identifying herself to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, France, as "I am the Immaculate Conception," that singular privilege that flows from her

Divine Maternity announced by the Angel Gabriel. (Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity)

**(Question 1:** Our Lady of Lourdes was one of the approved apparitions we discussed during our series, “Miracles and Faith,” specifically episode 53. At the time we did that series, I was unaware of Our Lady of America, therefore, I found it interesting that the history of Our Lady of America opens by pointing to the actions of US bishops in the mid 1800s and the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Why are the threads of history important to our discernment?)

- History provides the context of the flow of time
- Following threads opens doors to greater understanding
  - ➔ Sets the stage
  - ➔ Instances of what God asks of us
  - ➔ Points to God's enduring wisdom
- Examination of consistency
  - ➔ Consistency is not always validation, but points to possibility
  - ➔ Inconsistency points to error → one or the other is false
  - ➔ Reconciliation of inconsistency points to truth, but can be difficult

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As the Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity relate the story of Our Lady of America, they preface the story of Mildred Mary Neuzil with the following scripture.

(1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

26 Consider your own calling, brothers. *Not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.* 27 Rather, God chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, 28 and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, 29 so that no human being might boast before God.

We might want to also consider this scripture known as the Cantic of Mary:

(Luke 1:46-55)

46 And Mary said:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;

47 my spirit rejoices in God my savior:

48 For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;  
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.

49 The Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

50 His mercy is from age to age  
to those who fear him.

51 He has shown might with his arm,  
dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.

52 He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones

*but lifted up the lowly.*

*53 The hungry he has filled with good things;  
the rich he has sent away empty.*

*54 He has helped Israel his servant,  
remembering his mercy,*

*55 according to his promise to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*

**(Question 2:** We might notice a pattern here. What is the nature of this pattern and why might this be important to our understanding of the ways God works within our lives?)

- God often works through the lowly and humble of spirit
- God often works through the powerless and the weak
- God's works through the lowly to humble the ruling class
- God's power can work through us, if we let Him

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**(Question 3:** Donna Mae, you related that you never met Sister Mary Ephrem in person, but you did converse with her via phone and mail. From that interaction what were your impressions of Sister Mary Ephrem?)

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In Part II of the story related by the Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity, state:

Various priests found nothing adverse to faith or morals in the messages which indicated a theological understanding that exceeded what Sister could have learned from her courses. (Contemplative Sisters of the Indwelling Trinity)

We did our series on Miracles and Faith, episodes 47 – 56, beginning in June 2018. That series concluded with Fatima, which caused us to look back to Pope Leo XIII and his vision in 1884, which gave us the Saint Michael prayer which many pray to this day. As we opened the doors to history I was drawn to my personal experiences which began during the Cold War, but as I lived those days I was pretty ignorant of the history of the Church Christ built upon Peter. It was not until I saw the EWTN documentary, “Wolves in Sheep's Clothing,” that I began to put personal experience and history together. After learning more about Fatima and the threads of history which flowed through it, it prompted us to produce the series, “By Their Fruits You Shall Know Them,” episodes 56 – 68, which carries many warnings for our day.

As we noted during our last series, Divine Mercy, episodes 140 – 147, there were threads we noted which connected to Fatima, especially as the relationship of Sister Lucia continued with Our Lady. As I began to read the writings of Sister Mary Ephrem I could not help but notice similarities of message between the writings of Saint Faustina and Sister Mary Ephrem.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this series, which was episode 148, I noted that both Saint Faustina and Sister Mary Ephrem took their vows in 1933; perhaps a coincidence. I also noted

that the same year Saint Faustina passed away, Sister Mary Ephrem reported that she began to have mystical experiences; perhaps another coincidence, but I mark such connections by which to examine what threads of history might flow through them.

**(Question 4:** Of course, commonalities of faith are likely to lead to commonalities of writing, but our experiences sometimes run in parallel without knowledge of another, such that we do not see threads in the moment until we look back and examine. Donna Mae, as you conversed with Sister Mary Ephrem, what knowledge did she indicate that she might have concerning Fatima or Divine Mercy?)

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During the first episode of this series, I also noted what our Lady told Sister Lucia of Fatima that the final battle with Satan will be over marriage and family. Sister Lucia wrote to Cardinal Caffarra:

“The final battle between the Lord and the kingdom of Satan will be about Marriage and the Family.” In her letter, she added, “Don't be afraid, because whoever works for the sanctity of Marriage and the Family will always be fought against and opposed in every way, because this is the decisive issue.” Then she concluded, “nevertheless, Our Lady has already crushed his head.” (Catholic News Agency)

**(Question 5:** This intrigued me, because that letter was written to Cardinal Caffarra in 1983 or '84 (Montagna), but Sister Mary Ephrem was writing of her call to the sanctification of the family in the 1940s. Her journey towards this call, though, appeared to take several years. Donna Mae, what did Sister Mary Ephrem relate to you about this call to address the sanctification of the family? How has this experience, as you became part of the history of Our Lady of America, moved you to engage others concerning the sanctification of family?)

### Quotes:

– *Pope Pius XII - Fulgens Corona*

The radiant crown of glory with which the most pure brow of the Virgin Mother was encircled by God, seems to Us to shine more brilliantly, as We recall to mind the day, on which, one hundred years ago, Our Predecessor of happy memory Pius IX, surrounded by a vast retinue of Cardinals and Bishops, with infallible apostolic authority defined, pronounced and solemnly sanctioned "that the doctrine, which holds that the Most Blessed Virgin Mary at the first moment of her conception was, by singular grace and privilege of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the Human race, preserved from all stains of original sin, is revealed by God, and therefore to be firmly and resolutely believed by all the faithful."

– *Bishop Rhoades - Statement Regarding the Devotion to Our Lady of America, 24 Apr 2020*

Given this history of prayers and religious articles being given approval by competent ecclesiastical authority, the use of such prayers religious articles may continue as a matter of private devotion, but not as a public devotion of the Church. Indeed, such private devotion

would be consistent with the history of the United States of America being dedicated to Our Lady.

In his first pastoral letter of May 28, 1792, America's first bishop, Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, dedicated the United States to the Mother of Jesus and our Spiritual Mother. On May 5, 1846, the Sixth Provincial Council of the Church in America passed a resolution choosing Mary Immaculate as the Patroness of the United States of America and making December 8<sup>th</sup> the national patronal feast. Subsequently, in 1847, the Sacred Congregation, *Propaganda Fide*, announced that "our Holy Father Pius IX most willingly confirmed the wishes of the Council that has selected the Blessed Virgin, conceived without sin, as the patroness of the Church in the United States of America." On November 20, 1959, the occasion of the dedication of the National Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, the Bishops of the United States consecrated our nation to Mary Immaculate, in a renewal of the national Marian entrustments of Bishop Carroll (1792) and the Sixth Provincial Council (1846).

While Our Lady of Guadalupe is recognized as the Patroness of North, Central, and South America, Our Lady is the specific Patroness of the United States of America under her title as the Immaculate Virgin. As such, the faithful may indeed pray to Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, as the Patroness of America. At the same time, such private devotion should in no way imply approval or acceptance of purported revelations, visions, or locutions to attributed to Sister Mary Ephrem (Mildred) Neuzil other than as her own subjective inner religious experiences.

### **Final Thoughts:**

As we continue our discussion of Our Lady of America, we want to ensure we maintain visibility of Bishop Rhoades findings as well as the teaching of our faith and the warnings of the signs of our times. It is important we not only consider the wisdom we find in scripture, but we must also examine what the threads of history reveal. This is no easy task.

We discussed that God works through the humble and the lowly. What greater means for us to witness the power of God, that [He] "*chose the foolish of the world to shame the wise, and God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong, and God chose the lowly and despised of the world, those who count for nothing, to reduce to nothing those who are something, so that no human being might boast before God.*" (1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

As the faithful, we must study His Word and endeavor to become an example of His ways. He may not work through us as He has through Saints such as Faustina or Bernadette, or the children Lucia, Jacinta, and Francisco; but if we open ourselves to Him, He will work through us in ways which shall touch the hearts of those who cross our path. Let us, then, be an instrument of His peace and a herald of His Truth.

**Wrap Up:** Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we continue to discuss some more about the history of Our Lady of America.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to share the blessings of our trust and faith in You. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will

continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

**Next Session:** Our Lady of America – Part IV: Some More History

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