

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bishop's Decree gives Our Lady, Patroness of America a home!

Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 2021

His Excellency, Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne – South Bend issued a Singular Decree on November 3, 2020, which recognized the Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Chapel, Rome City, Indiana as a chapel of the lay faithful. And he further set forth that the Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Center is an allowed place of pilgrimage and is free to engage in public spiritual activities (Holy Mass, Rosary, Confessions, etc.) subject to the immediate vigilance of the Pastor of Saint Gaspar Parish, Rome City.

Further, the Decree went on to allow the devotion to Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of America to be practiced and promoted at the Mother of Mercy Center.

The devotion's path was first envisioned by the Bishops having jurisdiction in their Statement Regarding the Devotion to Our Lady of America (May 7, 2020). In subsequent dialogue with Bishop Rhoades the content of the decree was prayerfully envisioned and discerned resulting in his issuance.

“When it was issued, we were still amid extensive renovations and repairs to the Chapel. We have been operating under this decree since March 2020, when we offered the first Mass and now see it appropriate to make known its existence,” said Al Langsenkamp, Mother of Mercy Center and Foundation President.

Just recently, Bishop Rhoades responded to a request for two changes; he has approved a change in the Center's name to Our Lady, Patroness of America Center; and has approved a change in the name of the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception to Prayer to Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of America. Both are in line with his desire that the Center focus attention on her role as Patroness of America.

Al Langsenkamp added, “The Bishops have given Our Lady, Patroness of America a home where she can welcome, console and bless pilgrims who seek her intercession. Further, they have pointed to her as Our Mother and Our Nation's Patroness who will intercede for us before the Holy Trinity. She is calling us to imitate the Holy Family in virtue and faith. More so, with the Bishops' decrees her intercession is available to us personally and as a nation in a new and powerful way! We are most grateful to Bishop Rhoades for his discerning pastoral care and trust in our mission at the Our Lady, Patroness of America Center.”

“May the Lord continue to bless you and your work! May Our Blessed Mother watch over and intercede for you and the pilgrims who come to the Center!” says Bishop Rhoades.

It is now official: devotion to Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of America is recognized by the Catholic Church as an allowed devotion of the lay faithful! Our Lady, Patroness of America now has a home and place of pilgrimage. It is the Our Lady, Patroness of America Center, Rome City Indiana. May her abundant Graces flow upon us!

By Thy Holy and Immaculate Conception O Mary, deliver us from evil.

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Attachments:

July 29, 2019, Singular Decree
May 7, 2020, Statement Regarding the Devotion to Our Lady of America
November 3, 2020, Singular Decree



SINGULAR DECREE

In the Name of God, Amen!

With Pope Francis as our Holy Father, in accordance with the *Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations* (CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *Normae de modo procedendi in diudicandis praesumptis apparitionibus ac revelationibus*, 25-II-1978), I, Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, by the grace of God and the authority of the Apostolic See, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend, issue this decree of judgment in accord with *CIC/83* cann. 48, 50-51 regarding claimed supernatural apparitions to Sister Mildred (formerly Sister Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, CPPS, in Rome City, Indiana, U.S.A.

THE FACTS

Sister Mildred (formerly Sister Mary Ephrem) Neuzil, CPPS, was professed as a religious in 1933. About 1938 she began to have what seemed like mystical experiences. They may be described as inner locutions and visions of the spirit, etc.: visits from the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, inner messages from Our Lord on the Cross, and finally frequent visions and messages from the Mother of God and Saint Joseph. In 1948 these experiences were revealed to her confessor. The experiences became more vivid and the messages more pressing. In 1954, these visits took on the nature of a specific program of special devotion to Mary as "Our Lady of America" which this sister was commanded to propagate.

Sister Neuzil served in various places in which these various alleged mystical experiences took place. She claimed that the "official visits" of Our Lady began in the Fall of 1956 at Kneipp Springs (Rome City, Indiana, U.S.A.) in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. According to her, Mary promised that "greater miracles" of inner conversion would be granted to the United States if they honored her with pure hearts as Our Lady of America, especially honored as such at the National Shrine in Washington, D.C.

These alleged visions and messages from Mary, as well as from St. Joseph, continued through 1959.

Over time, some devotion to Our Lady of America has arisen, including in the place where the alleged apparitions began, Kneipp Springs.

In 2017, six bishops of dioceses in which alleged apparitions and private revelations of Our Lady of America to Sister Mary Ephrem occurred petitioned the USCCB to do an official investigation, however, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith advised that one of the bishops where the alleged apparitions and private revelations occurred should conduct the investigation. I agreed to the request of the other five bishops to conduct the investigation.

In 2018, the BVM Foundation, Inc., provided extensive, authentic documentation of Sister Neuzil's correspondence, especially with her spiritual director, of evidence of cult, and of other evidence related to these alleged occurrences. I then formed a commission of theological and canonical experts to assist me in evaluation of this evidence, and further evidence was gathered including personal interviews with witnesses who knew Sister Neuzil personally.

THE LAW

The above-referenced document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith gives direction as to the competent authority, the procedure to be followed, and the criteria to be used when evaluating alleged apparitions and revelations.

Regarding the authority competent to do the investigation, it states: "Above all, the duty of vigilance and intervention falls to the Ordinary of the place."

Regarding the procedure, it states: "If, on the occasion of a presumed supernatural fact, there arises in a spontaneous way among the faithful a certain cult or some devotion, the competent Ecclesiastical Authority has the serious duty of looking into it without delay and of diligently watching over it."

Further: "When Ecclesiastical Authority is informed of a presumed apparition or revelation, it will be its responsibility:

- a) first, to judge the fact according to positive and negative criteria [. . .]
- b) then, if this examination results in a favorable conclusion, to permit some public manifestation of cult or of devotion, overseeing this with great prudence (equivalent to the formula, "for now, nothing stands in the way") (*pro nunc nihil obstare*);
- c) finally, in light of time passed and of experience, with special regard to the fecundity of spiritual fruit generated from this new devotion, to express a judgment regarding the authenticity and supernatural character if the case so merits".

Regarding the criteria for judgment, it states:

A) *Positive Criteria*:

a) Moral certitude, or at least great probability of the existence of the fact, acquired by means of a serious investigation;

b) Particular circumstances relative to the existence and to the nature of the fact, that is to say:

1. Personal qualities of the subject or of the subjects (in particular, psychological equilibrium, honesty and rectitude of moral life, sincerity and habitual docility towards Ecclesiastical Authority, the capacity to return to a normal regimen of a life of faith, etc.);
2. As regards revelation: true theological and spiritual doctrine and immune from error;
3. Healthy devotion and abundant and constant spiritual fruit (for example, spirit of prayer, conversion, testimonies of charity, etc.).

B) *Negative Criteria:*

a) Manifest error concerning the fact.

b) Doctrinal errors attributed to God himself, or to the Blessed Virgin Mary, or to some saint in their manifestations, taking into account however the possibility that the subject might have added, even unconsciously, purely human elements or some error of the natural order to an authentic supernatural revelation (cf. Saint Ignatius, *Exercises*, no. 336).

c) Evidence of a search for profit or gain strictly connected to the fact.

d) Gravely immoral acts committed by the subject or his or her followers when the fact occurred or in connection with it.

e) Psychological disorder or psychopathic tendencies in the subject, that with certainty influenced on the presumed supernatural fact, or psychosis, collective hysteria or other things of this kind.

It is to be noted that these criteria, be they positive or negative, are not peremptory but rather indicative, and they should be applied cumulatively or with some mutual convergence.”

THE FINDINGS

Having investigated the matter thoroughly, after study and prayerful discernment by me and the investigatory commission, I can now offer judgment according to the positive and negative criteria listed above. First, regarding Sister Neuzil herself, there is much evidence that she was honest, morally upright, psychologically balanced, devoted to religious life and without guile. Alongside these many signs of goodness, we also found signs of imperfection, but no evidence that she was the perpetrator of a hoax or the victim of delusion. What she communicated about her alleged experiences, she believed to be true, and her communication of these alleged experiences are filled with humility and forthrightness.

Regarding spiritual fruits, there are numerous reports of good fruits, including some conversions, spiritual refreshment and consolations, and even some physical healings at the Rome City site of the alleged apparitions. However, upon study of these reports, we cannot conclude that any of these events are conclusive enough to warrant certification as miracles. It seems likely that in such personal contexts of faith and prayer, God's graces were received.

Regarding the alleged revelations themselves, much of what is expressed does not contain any doctrinal error. However, there is a claim regarding Saint Joseph which has never been expressed as Catholic doctrine and must be seen as an error, namely, that he was a "co-redeemer" with Christ for the salvation of the world.

Sister Neuzil's spiritual director, Archbishop Paul F. Leibold of Cincinnati, wrote to the Director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. on June 17, 1970. In that letter written two years before his death, Archbishop Leibold stated that he was unable to make a judgment on the supernatural nature of the visions or apparitions reported by Sister Neuzil. He did, however, attest to Sister Neuzil's holiness and to the solid doctrinal content of her writings. He noted that he "helped her with some private printing of some material and also in having a medal struck, all strictly as a private devotion." Archbishop Leibold wrote: "I have never taken any action to promote her devotion publicly and of course never followed through on the Shrine request." (N.B. The "Shrine request" refers to the alleged request of Our Lady of America that her statue be placed in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception).

Looking at the nature and quality of the experiences themselves, we find that they are more to be described as subjective inner religious experiences rather than objective external visions and revelations. A well-known author describes this critical distinction stating: "Simply put, religious experience as distinct from private revelation is recognized as highly subjective" (BENEDICT J. GROESCHEL, *A Still, Small Voice*, San Francisco-CA 1993, p. 128), and further: "The vision of Bernadette [. . .] is something clearly outside herself. It is not primarily subjective. There is an experience that seems to fall between the two, between the obvious personal experience of Thérèse, in which emotion, will, and intelligence are completely involved, and that of Bernadette [. . .] These descriptions, especially that of Saint Thérèse, serve to illustrate that religious experience of a type very different from private revelation is possible to all" (*Ibid.*, pp. 130-132).

Thus, while it may be said that there is possibly an authenticity to Sister Neuzil's subjective religious experience, we do not find evidence pointing to her experiences as being in the category of objective private revelation. Sister Neuzil herself describes her experience as "inner vision" (p. 143), and we find that her experiences were of a type where her own imagination and intellect were involved in the formation of the events. It seems that these were authentically graced moments, even perhaps of a spiritual quality beyond what most people experience, but subjective ones in which her own imagination and intellect were constitutively engaged, putting form to inner spiritual movements. However, we do not find evidence that these were objective visions and revelations of the type seen at Guadalupe, Fatima and Lourdes.

Therefore, I must come to the conclusion that the visions and revelations themselves cannot be said to be of supernatural origin in the sense of objective occurrences (*non constat de supernaturalitate*); thus further, I cannot approve or support public devotion or cult.

Date: July 29, 2019

Given in Fort Wayne, Indiana,
at the Archbishop Noll Center

+ Kevin C. Rhoades

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

M. A. Gurtner

Very Reverend Mark A. Gurtner
Chancellor

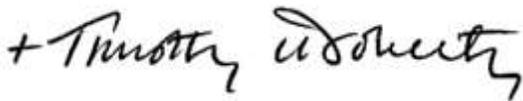
We, the undersigned diocesan bishops of the dioceses where the purported visions, locutions and private revelations were said to have occurred in relation to the devotion to “Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin,” concur with the foregoing findings and conclusions of the investigative commission as decreed by Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades, Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend:



Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati



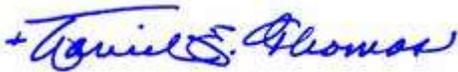
Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron
Archbishop of Detroit



Most Reverend Timothy L. Doherty
Bishop of Lafayette in Indiana



Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix



Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo in Ohio



DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE – SOUTH BEND

915 South Clinton Street · Post Office Box 390
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Statement Regarding the Devotion to Our Lady of America

May 7, 2020

The undersigned bishops issue the following statement in our capacity as the bishops of the dioceses where alleged visions, locutions and private revelations were said to have occurred in relation to the devotion to “Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin.”

The devotion of “Our Lady of America” originated in a series of private revelations to Sister Mary Ephrem (baptized Mildred) Neuzil, many of which took place within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio. Sister Neuzil was born in 1916 and was professed in 1933 into the Congregation of the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, whose generalate resided in Dayton, Ohio (within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati). On June 16, 1957, Sister Neuzil became part of a contemplative branch of the same congregation, which was located at Our Lady of the Nativity Convent at New Riegel, Ohio (in the Diocese of Toledo-in-America). The contemplative branch of the congregation was suppressed in 1979, at which time the sisters took up residence in Seneca County, Ohio.

Sister Neuzil reported that she started to experience mystical events in 1938 while assigned to the Chancery at Cincinnati, Ohio. These eventually led to a series of purported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary which began on September 25, 1956 at Rome City, Indiana in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend. The following day, September 26, 1956, the Feast of the North American Martyrs, (also at Rome City, Indiana) the Immaculate Virgin reportedly first identified herself as “Our Lady of America” in grateful response to the devotion given by the Catholic faithful in America to her unique privilege as the “Immaculate Conception.” The message attributed to Our Lady was essentially to promote the sanctification of the family and purity of heart.

Sister Neuzil reported that she continued to receive apparitions of “Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin” at various locations until December 20, 1959, after which time the communication between Our Lady and the visionary principally took on the nature of locutions until her death in 2000. Besides the dioceses mentioned above, these other locations include the Archdiocese of Detroit, the Diocese of Phoenix, and the Diocese of Lafayette-in-Indiana.

Due to the number of dioceses involved and inquiries being received from various parts of the country regarding “Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin” along with the

purported request of Our Lady for a procession of the bishops of the United States and placement of the statue of Our Lady of America in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., it was decided to request the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to intervene in this matter in accord with the *Norms Regarding the Manner of Proceeding in the Discernment of Presumed Apparitions or Revelations*, issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on February 25, 1978.

In November 2017, His Eminence, Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, then-USCCB President, received instructions from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith that the competent ecclesiastical authority for conducting the investigation should be the local bishop of the diocese where the alleged apparitions and private revelations occurred, or another bishop who demonstrates such competence. The lead bishop who conducts the investigation was to arrive at a first conclusion. In doing so, he was instructed to call upon whatever assistance was deemed necessary, although the enlistment of one or two experts in Mariology, along with experts in the field of spiritual theology, was highly encouraged, so the authenticity of the presumed mystical phenomena could be established.

Given the supra-diocesan nature of this case, moreover, the Congregation observed that the bishop designated to lead the examination could involve the bishops of the other dioceses in whose territories the apparitions and private revelations have allegedly occurred.

In accord with these instructions, the other five diocesan bishops where the apparitions and private revelations were said to have occurred requested that Bishop Kevin Rhoades of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend serve as the lead bishop, since the purported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary allegedly began on September 25, 1956 at Rome City, Indiana, in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, where people still gather and pray for the Blessed Mother's intercession under the title, "Our Lady of America." Bishop Rhoades agreed to the request of the other five bishops to conduct the investigation and formed a commission of theological and canonical experts to assist in evaluating the evidence, including personal interviews with witnesses who knew Sister Neuzil personally.

The key finding of the commission are as follows:

1. First, regarding Sister Neuzil herself, there is much evidence that she was honest, morally upright, psychologically balanced, devoted to religious life and without guile. Alongside these many signs of goodness, we also found signs of imperfection, but no evidence that she was the perpetrator of a hoax or the victim of delusion. What she communicated about her alleged experiences, she believed to be true, and her communication of these alleged experiences are filled with humility and forthrightness.
2. Regarding spiritual fruits, there are numerous reports of good fruits, including some conversions, spiritual refreshment, and consolations, and even some physical healings at the Rome City site of the alleged apparitions. However, upon study of these reports, we cannot conclude that any of these events are conclusive enough to warrant certification as miracles. It seems likely that in such personal contexts of faith and prayer, God's graces were received.

3. Regarding the alleged revelations themselves, much of what is expressed does not contain any doctrinal error. However, there is a claim regarding Saint Joseph which has never been expressed as Catholic doctrine and must be seen as an error, namely, that he was a “co-redeemer” with Christ for the salvation of the world.
4. Looking at the nature and quality of the experiences themselves, we find that they are more to be described as subjective inner religious experiences rather than objective external visions and revelations.
5. Thus, while it may be said that there is possibly an authenticity to Sister Neuzil’s subjective religious experience, we do not find evidence pointing to her experiences as being in the category of objective private revelation. Sister Neuzil herself describes her experience as “inner vision” (p. 143), and we find that her experiences were of a type where her own imagination and intellect were involved in the formation of the events. It seems that these were authentically graced moments, even perhaps of a spiritual quality beyond what most people experience, but subjective ones in which her own imagination and intellect were constitutively engaged, putting form to inner spiritual movements. However, we do not find evidence that these were objective visions and revelations of the type seen at Guadalupe, Fatima, and Lourdes.

Based on these findings, Bishop Rhoades came to the conclusion that “the visions and revelations themselves cannot be said to be of supernatural origin in the sense of objective occurrences (*non constat de supernaturalitate*); thus further, I cannot approve or support public devotion or cult.” The bishops of the other five dioceses have read and also accept these findings and conclusions.

At the same time, it should be noted that Sister Neuzil’s spiritual director of many years, the late Monsignor Paul F. Leibold, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, who later became the Bishop of Evansville and then Archbishop of Cincinnati, had a medal struck with the image of Our Lady of America. The contents of the purported private revelation received by Sister Neuzil were published in a booklet, first in 1960 and again in 1971. Both of these editions were published with the approval of Archbishop Leibold.

As Archbishop of Cincinnati, Archbishop Leibold commissioned a wooden plaque with the image of Our Lady of America, which he gave to the cloister at New Riegel, where it was displayed for many years in a public area. He had the wooden plaque created for the specific purpose of its use in processions at the New Riegel convent. Archbishop Leibold also authorized the Weberding Woodcarving Shop at Batesville, Indiana, to carve a statue of Our Lady of America. The statue was carved for Our Lady of the Nativity Convent at New Riegel, Ohio, at which public devotions to Our Lady of America were regularly celebrated.

Other bishops have permitted the public display of a statue of Our Lady of America for devotion. For instance, the late Bishop William G. Connare of Greensburg permitted a statue to

be displayed at the Carmel of the Assumption at Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Also, a statue of Our Lady of America was carried in procession in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on several occasions by the *Apostolatus Uniti* and other groups. On May 31, 2006, a statue of Our Lady of America was enthroned at the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament and Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Hanceville, Alabama, by the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate. The statue which was enthroned at Hanceville is the same statue which Bishop Connare authorized for public devotion at Latrobe.

In 1963, the prayer attached to the devotion also received the *imprimatur* of then-Monsignor Leibold when he was Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. This *imprimatur* was granted after receiving the *nihil obstat* from the *ensor librorum*, then-Assistant Chancellor Father Daniel E. Pilarczyk, who later became Archbishop of Cincinnati. Years later, on July 28, 2005, responding to an inquiry about the devotion to Our Lady of America, Archbishop Pilarczyk wrote, “While I am not able to find anything that would indicate that Archbishop Leibold granted approval to the apparitions, he remained Sister’s spiritual director until his death in 1972. He also arranged for a striking of a medal, the carving of some relief plaques, and the design of a statue of Our Lady of America. He was obviously very supportive of Sister and her message until the time of his death in 1972. In your letter, you ask if devotion to Our Lady of America is being fostered in the Archdiocese [of Cincinnati]. I do not know of any campaign to promote it.”

It should be noted that Archbishop Leibold himself wrote to the Director of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. on June 17, 1970. In that letter written two years before his death, Archbishop Leibold stated that he was unable to make a judgment on the supernatural nature of the visions or apparitions reported by Sister Neuzil. He did, however, attest to Sister Neuzil’s holiness and to the solid doctrinal content of her writings. He noted that he “helped her with some private printing of some material and also in having a medal struck, all strictly as a private devotion.” Archbishop Leibold wrote: “I have never taken any action to promote her devotion publicly and of course never followed through on the Shrine request.” (N.B. The “Shrine request” refers to the alleged request of Our Lady of America that her statue be placed in the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception).

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 8th 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.

+ Kevin C. Rhoades

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend

+ Dennis M. Schnurr

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr
Archbishop of Cincinnati

+ Allen H. Vigneron

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Archbishop of Detroit

+ Timothy L. Doherty

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Bishop of Lafayette in Indiana

Thomas J. Olmsted

Most Reverend Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix

+ Daniel E. Thomas

Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo in Ohio



SINGULAR DECREE

Given that the Our Lady, Mother of Mercy Center (“Center”) is located in the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend;

Given that Sister Ephrem Neuzil claimed to have divine visions there, especially of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and given that I, with concurrence of five other bishops of the places where alleged visions took place, have determined these alleged visions not to have been of supernatural origin (cf. Singular Decree, July 29, 2019);

Given that the Mother of Mercy Foundation (“Foundation”) wishes nonetheless to promote spiritual activity at the Center inspired by the teachings coming from Sister Neuzil’s spiritual inspiration;

Having heard representatives of the Foundation on September 12, 2020, in accord with *CIC/83* canon 50, I issue this decree in accord with *CIC/83* canon 305 (“All associations of the Christian faithful are subject to the vigilance of competent ecclesiastical authority which is to take care that the integrity of faith and morals is preserved in them and is to watch so that abuse does not creep into ecclesiastical discipline”) and direct that:

1. The Center is free to welcome pilgrims.
2. The Center is free to engage in public spiritual activities (Holy Mass, Rosary, Confessions, etc.) subject to the immediate vigilance of the Pastor of Saint Gaspar Parish, Rome City.
3. The name Our Lady of America is understood to be short for Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of America and has no other meaning. The title Our Lady, the Immaculate Virgin, Patroness of America, should ordinarily be used.
4. The statue of Our Lady of America is allowed to remain on display at Rome City in the West arm of the Mother of Mercy Chapel.
5. Singular Decree of July 29, 2019, should be displayed at the Center.

6. Prayer cards, message diary and medals may be available at the Center, with modifications which do not imply supernaturality of the visions or messages.
7. The Center is not to refer to the origin of the messages as being supernatural. The origin can be however referred as inspired in prayer.
8. A pamphlet is to be made available to the public explaining the devotion, its origin, and the historical meaning of the name as well as the following statement: "Ecclesiastical authorities have determined that the visions and revelations cannot be said to be of supernatural origin in the sense of objective occurrences."
9. Materials may not refer to Saint Joseph as "co-redeemer."
10. The Center follows all diocesan protocols for Safe Environment regarding clerics from outside the diocese who come on pilgrimage (or otherwise) and engage in public ministry, even if with only their own people, namely, that a current Affidavit of Suitability for Ministry for the cleric is on file in the Office of the Vicar General.

This decree is subject to modification by the Diocesan Bishop *motu proprio* or at the request of the Foundation.



Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend



Very Reverend Mark A. Gurtner, J.C.D.
Chancellor

Given at the Archbishop Noll Center,
Fort Wayne, Indiana,
On November 3, 2020