

A little, white dove, a Sign of Peace



From the letters of Sister Mary Ephrem to Archbishop Paul F. Leibold, Vicar General of Cincinnati

Our Lord Jesus to Sister Mary Ephrem: *“Ask Me not for a sign. Wouldst thou be as the Scribes and Pharisees or even as My Apostles, always seeking signs? What I ask of thee is faith, that deep, strong faith that seeks no signs but only believes. **Thou thyself, shall be the sign, the sign I will give to the world. A little, white dove, a sign of peace, yes, the reign of peace in the world.** “If I have brought thee low, my poor child, that thou art groveling upon the earth, know that it is for thy good, for he whom I love I chastise. Since **I wish to do a great work in thee, and through thee in souls,** thou must be purified beforehand in the fires of humiliation and sorrow so that, weighed down with thy own misery, thou mayest share in my sorrow for all sinners who, crushed beneath the burden of their sins, refuse My help in order that they might find relief. Oh how My Heart yearns after them, poor, fallen creatures. Take courage, My daughter. Soon I will come and raise thee up in My arms. Then thou wilt see the Glory of God.” July, 1955*

Titles given to Sister Mary Ephrem by the following:

Our Lord Jesus Christ – *“My little, white dove” “My two lowly ones, My chosen Priest and My little, white dove” (and then will you be formed into My Likeness and through you I will be formed in souls) 2.20.54 , 5.29.54, 7.11.54, 6.5.57 “little secretary of My Heart” 7.12-15.54 “Thou shalt be the light of thy Community” “Thou art a paradise wherein the Trinity takes Its delight” “My little paradise” 10.24.54 “Thou art the daughter of My Heart” 11.25.54 “Thou thyself, shall be the sign, the sign I will give to the world. A little, white dove, a sign of peace, yes, the reign of peace in the world” “my poor child” “My daughter” July 1955 “My spouse” “Bride of My Heart” “My little white dove” “spouse of My Heart” 2.20.54, 8.16.56, 2.19.57, 3.6.57, 6.5.57 “My dear spouse” “My sweet spouse” “My lovely one” “My little one” 2.19.57 “My little one, simple and most lovely in My sight because of the lowliness of your heart” “My beloved one” “My little, white dove, sweet spouse of My Heart” 3.6.57 “Beloved spouse” 2.26.58 “My best beloved” 7.18.59*

Our Lady - *“My child” “My sweet child” “child of My Pure Heart” 2.11.57 “My sweet child” “my little one” 3.3.57 “My little daughter” 3.3.57 “small one” “sweet child” 6.5.57 “child of My Heart” “My small one, so tenderly Loved by your Mother” “My humble one, My small flower” “My tender child” “My poor child, the little white dove so dear to Me and the Heart of My Son” 8.22.57 “My child, daughter of My Pure Heart” “My small one” “poor child” “My sweet child” “Beloved daughter, spouse of my Son” “My dear daughter, sweet child” 9.26.57 “My little white dove” 7.18.59 “My child” “sweet child” 12. 20.59*

St. Michael - *“little maid” “little Joan” (He told me the “Big Maid” the “Big Joan”, as he called her had a great battle to fight, but though it was very great, that which I must fight is yet greater as it is mainly against the powers of evil and besides the forces against all good are much greater now than they were then.) “Little white dove of Jesus” 9.29.55 “My little sister” 5.8.57*

St. Joseph – “my little one” “my child” 3.11.58 “dear child” “lovely child, precious to the Heart of your Spiritual Father” 3.19.58 “little child of My Most Pure Heart” “little daughter” 3.30.58 “my beloved daughter” “dear child” “lovely child” “beloved child” 4.12.58

Mother Brunner – “you are their crown, in you they will be glorified” (speaking of first Sisters of the Order) “you are my beloved daughter, my glory and my crown” “precious daughter” 6.26.58

Quotes of Sister Mary Ephrem

letters from Sister Mary Ephrem (SME) to Archbishop Paul F. Leibold (PFL) unless otherwise noted
(Red type is brief summary added through this work, not by SME or PFL)

Feb. 20, 1954 – (additional date 2.22.54) SME to PFL - Sisters of the Precious Blood 251 East Fourth Street Ottawa, Ohio. (SME confides in her spiritual director, Rev. Leibold. Our Lord has a Special Message for him and for Sister)....Father, I have another problem. My Superior is displeased with me because I do not confide in her. But Father, I cannot. That has always been a cross to me. God was extremely good to put me under your guidance Father, because in no one else do I have such confidence. I respect my Superior and I try to obey her in all things but I cannot confide in her. Must I father? Am I doing wrong in not giving her this confidence? Father, I am going to try to do some extra penance during Lent as Our Lord has asked – stricter silence, mortifications at meal-time, extra prayers – more efforts at patience and a greater kindness towards others. Father if you know any others I could practice, please tell me. Our Lord has a special message for you this time Father. I knew it would come but didn't know when. God bless you Father. Pray for Sme

(cont.) **Our Lord:** “My Heart is a refuge for all sinners. If only they would come to me, I would enclose them in My Heart. There they would be cleansed and My Father's anger would not reach them. Alas, bride of My Heart, alas for those who will not come to Me. Where will they hide from My Father's anger? Pray, pray, pray, oh My little, white dove, pray and sacrifice yourself for the souls of poor sinners. How many are lost because there are no prayers said for them, no sacrifices made for them. Where are your prayers, oh My Priests and Religious, where are your sacrifices? Do you not know that sinners will not be converted unless prayer and penance call down the grace of God upon them? My Chosen Ones, you in particular are responsible for the souls of poor sinners. It is to you I have entrusted them. As their spiritual fathers and mothers you must care for them and by your unceasing prayers in their behalf, lead them safely to My Father's House. Oh My Well-beloved Ones, you have become selfish and thoughtless. You have forgotten the greatness of your responsibilities. Unless you become saints, there will be no hope for poor sinners, for it is My wish that through your sacrificial lives, the souls of poor sinners will be saved. My little, white dove, tell your spiritual Father, him whom I have placed over you to guide and direct you, tell him that My Heart is pleased with his efforts to make Me loved. I will bless him, and make his work fruitful in behalf of all the souls entrusted to his care and priestly ministrations. Tell him, if he would please Me more, to double his efforts in making known the love of My Heart for poor sinners. I ask of him what I continue to ask of you, oh bride of My Heart – prayer and penance. As a priest after My Own Heart, I will be with him in all his trials and sorrows. Tell him not to become discouraged at the crosses awaiting him for I, the great High-Priest go before him carrying the heaviest part of his cross. I seek always the humble and lowly of heart and since I have found two such, so I have entrusted to them a great Mission, but become not vain, for I have chosen him and you only because of your unworthiness and lack of virtue. Let this thought be with you always, that you may remember that it is I working through you, Who sanctify you for His glory and the salvation of souls. You are poor instruments in My hands, but 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 chosen Priest and My little, white dove, and then will you be formed into My Likeness and through you I will be formed in souls.”

Undated, image #10 from composite – written by Sister Mary Ephrem to Rev. P.F. Leibold - AMDG – JMJ
(SME speaks of the Divine Indwelling, to which she consecrates herself)

“The need for meditation, contemplation, interior prayer is so great that it cannot be stressed enough. We are a surface-minded people for the most part, so it is imperative at last, in this late hour, to seriously look into ourselves and recognize the Glory living within, drawing us to Itself, that Divine Presence, so mysterious, yet so infinitely real, the only Reality into Which and out of Which all others flow and have their birth. We partake of the Divine Life and this is our sanctity. The Holy Spirit leads each person according to their needs and lights at the moment but all spirituality has its basis in the Divine Trinity living within us. Because my body is the temple of God it deserves my profound respect and from this stems my attitude towards others. Body and spirit are so close that what you do to one you do to the other. The spirit must be the stronger as this is where control and discipline have their roots. Interior prayer, praying, is very simple. We speak to and with God, we listen to whatever He may have to say to us and at other times we just sit, etc., quietly in His Presence and enjoy His company. To co-operate with Him in His work in and through us we should get into the habit of consecrating each day to His honor and glory.”

We must give Him a free hand so that every thought is filled with His wisdom every word speaks it and every action is sanctified by it. As the family is formed by individuals the result of each member striving to live in the Divine Presence in this way the family itself will be sanctified. The Father sent His son to be a member of a family as an example to all families. The life of Jesus, Mary and Joseph was not an easy one. There were no miracles to make their living more bearable. They were no different than the families around them except in the dept. of their love for the Divine Presence within them. It is holy families that will save the Nation, save the world and bring about the peace so long desired. It is indeed late – but there is still time to save our world. Believe that God loves you, believe with all your heart and see what He will do for you – and what you will be able to do for Him and those about you. This is a divine partnership and nothing save our lack of faith can ever break it. Believe in Him Who lives in you and nothing will be impossible of attainment. What you cannot do He will do, only believe. *“Most Holy Trinity I adore You present in me and consecrate my whole life and its every moment to Your honor and glory, through the intercession of Jesus, Mary and Joseph grant to me the grace of living always in Your sanctifying Presence.”*

March 2, 1954 – (SME speaks of the need for solitude in a cloister and of obedience) Dear Rev. Father, May the ever Blessed Trinity abide with us forever! (...) You see, Father, Sister Florecita had informed me all about her activities concerning a cloistered branch in our Community. But as nothing seemed to materialize, I decided it would be better for me to try gaining admittance into a cloistered Order. Solitude, the cloister is a must for me, Father, at this last phase of my life. So if my own Community promises me this, I have no desire to go elsewhere, as it is not a different Order that I am seeking, only solitude. The fact is I would prefer remaining a Sister of the Precious Blood. So I told Mother that if she wished it that way, I would be glad to wait. To me Father, there is nothing like obedience, even if it be only to the wishes of Authority. To me they are commands.”

May 4, 1954 – (SME speaks of imitation of the earthly Trinity-the Holy Family, for closeness with the Holy Trinity Dwelling within, and union with the Divine Word) Rev. & dear Father, Humility of Jesus, purity of Mary, and obedience of St. Joseph, come reign in my heart. Make it another home of Nazareth, the sanctuary of every virtue. The above, Father, is one of my favorite prayers. (For) Unless we strive to imitate the virtues of the earthly Trinity, we cannot expect to draw close to the heavenly Trinity Who dwells within us. The Holy Trinity will not sanctify our Families, unless the members of these Families strive to imitate as much as possible the virtues of the Holy Family. Of course, Father, you know all this better than I do. Being a priest, must certainly let you in on many a Sacred Mystery of which the rest of us will ever be in ignorance.

(...) I have been studying the book of Sister Elisabeth of the Trinity, Father and was struck by the fact that though I had known very little about her, the mystical doctrine she practiced and taught had been very much a part of my

own life. I had been thinking of the name “Laudem Gloriam,” she had taken for herself and her injunction that every soul should be that towards God. But after one has become in one’s soul “the praise of glory” of the Trinity, it seems to me, that for some souls, or rather for many souls there must be something else. Must not the soul proclaim this glory to the world. The other morning as I was following the prayers of the Mass, I came to the Lavabo and was suddenly struck by these words of the Psalmist. Ut audiam vocem laudis: et enarrem universa mirabilia tua. Was not the Divine Word made Man, the first, Voice of His praise, in heaven and on earth. Is He not in our souls, the Voice ever praising His Father. But since He has decreed to hush His own human voice, so that the soul alone hears it, it is upon this same soul He depends to give utterance to the praise of the Trinity. After we have become, in union with the Divine Word, the “Laudem Gloriam”, of the Triune God, we must, in union with the Word, again become the “Vocem Laudis”, of this same God-Head within us. Oh God, make of each of us “the voice of Thy praise”, that we may proclaim Thy glory to countless generations of souls, who will thereby glorify Thee forever and ever: Father, there is so much more to tell, but I must stop now. I will conclude with this----- The Dark Night - *How dark the night That hides the sight Of Love that leads beyond. Into the valley Dark and low, Nighttime of the lonely soul. Deep within the shadows there Faith has lit a lantern, where The soul must go That she may grow In love divine. Why fear the night When Faith leads on? It's glimmering light Precludes the dawn, Where face to Face The soul and God, Meet in the eternal trysting place. No longer there, the light of Faith No longer there the shadows wraith, For Light itself, the Fount of Grace, Will greet the soul there, Face to Face.* Pray for me always Faithfully in (Trinity sketch) S.M. Ephrem

June 29, 1954 – (SME again acknowledges the sacredness of Holy Priesthood and her nothingness in Our Lord and invaluable suffering)...When I feel as I do now, the full weight of my weakness and sinfulness, I cast myself and all my wretchedness into the Heart of Christ. There, Rev. Father, is our refuge. When we cast ourselves thus upon our Lord, He Himself takes the full responsibility of our sanctification. We have only to humble ourselves and permit Him to do as He desires with us. It is not easy to feel so useless and so inadequate in the service of God. It is a hard way, but the safest way. It is the best way to keep us humble, and thus always to insure for ourselves the love of God, Whose eyes are always and ever fixed upon the lowly and humble of heart... I beg of you, Rev. Father, by the pure and sacred hands of your Holy Priesthood to offer daily, the poor, little, white dove to the Most Holy Trinity, in the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. May our hearts, united to the great Heart of Christ, become worthy instruments for the Father’s glory. You as a priest, Rev. Father are as the great and majestic eagle flying straight to the Divine Source of all light and love. May a little white dove, unable to fly such a vast distance, find a place on one of the great wings of your Holy Priesthood and thus also come a little closer to the Divine Sun? Whatever I have written, Father, our Lord has taught me. Never, of myself, could I have conceived such thoughts, such aspirations. That is why I say, they are not mine. They are His. It is true, Father, that I have often, especially these past months felt the keen prickings of the little spikes. Mostly it has been suffering of soul and mental anguish. But is it not also true that suffering is the potent safeguard of virtue? What would become of the ruby and the lily if the spikes were removed?

Nov. 14, 1954, Sunday (Not noted who this was written to or if part of a letter) – (SME’s prayer for the Trinity to reign within) “*Oh Trinity, worthy of all adoration, I wish to remain, in spirit on my knees, to forever acknowledge Thy reign in me and over me, to Thy Everlasting glory. Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Most Pure Heart of St. Joseph, I consecrate my life to Thy adoration and glory. At the moment of death, receive me, Oh my Triune Love, that I may continue my adoration of love through all eternity. Amen.*”

Nov. 23, 1954 – (SME speaks of the Voice of Our Lord within her. Regarding the Cloister, her true desire is the Will of God) “...Thank you for the sound advice that you give me in your letters, especially in the last one. It is true that what I have learned has not been from books. I believed that the higher life was not for me. I wanted only to love God with all my heart. I shied away from any books that concerned the mystical life. I was convinced they were not for me. Besides I didn’t want to get any silly notions in my head. Yet all the while He was following me. He was teaching me, Father, slowly and patiently. He spoke to me in the depths of my soul but I did not

recognize His Voice. When I look over the past, Father, and consider the graces and favors He has bestowed upon me, I am astounded. I am struck dumb at His immense mercy and goodness on the one hand and my callousness and ungenerosity on the other. I took them all for granted... In regards to the Cloister, Father, I leave myself at our Lord's disposal. My only desire now is to do His Will, to be always the child of His Good Pleasure. I can say now in perfect truth, that my only desire is to be formed into the likeness of Christ that I may be pleasing to the eyes of my Father in heaven. That is the purpose for which we were all placed in this world. It is our duty then to strive for it incessantly... Father, somehow, I don't enjoy things anymore the way I used to. There is such a longing inside of me. Having tasted God and the joy of union with Him, everything else seems to have lost its savor. I find it hard to keep my mind on my work although I try very much to do so. My heart is somewhere else and I can't bring it back. I hope my letters do not weary you, Father, as I know you are quite busy all the time with the work you must do. God bless you always, Father and keep you safe in the Heart of His Son. Faithfully Yours in (Trinity sketch) Sme

Nov. 25, 1954 (SME's whole longing was to live in complete adoration in union with Christ) Rev. & dear Father. The prayer to the Trinity I wrote, kneeling by the kitchen table. I was getting some things ready for the following morning. In the midst of it I was seized with an indescribable impulse. Thoughts of the Trinity and being conformed to the likeness of Christ filled my mind and my heart. It has become an obsession with me now. So I snatched a piece of old paper and wrote. My whole desire tended to adoration and praise. The prayer, as you can see repeats this theme over and over again. I was not thinking of myself or my needs, of petition or reparation. 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. I was suffering a great deal for I was inconsolable at the thought of my own ingratitude and of the crimes which sinners commit against God. I was in my room at the time. I couldn't keep back the tears though I am not one to give in emotionally. This was something different and impossible to explain. In the midst of it our Lord said to me: "*Thou art the daughter of My Heart. In thee My Heart is well pleased.*" But these words, far from consoling me, made the tears flow more than ever. I feel my ingratitude all the more when He lavishes upon me His goodness and mercy.

Oct. 24, 1954 (SME prayed for the Community she so dearly loved, and Word of Our Lord to her) Later our Lord spoke these words to me while I was praying for the sanctification of the Community, which I so dearly love: "*Thou shalt be the light of thy Community. They shall follow in thy way and be blest forever.*" Once, during prayer, I heard these words addressed to me: "*Thou art a paradise wherein the Trinity takes Its delight.*" Later: "*My little paradise, I thank thee for giving Me shelter in thee.*"

Nov. 12, 1954 (SME speaks of the mission to make the Divine Indwelling known and adored, which is continued in Heaven) 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. God bless you, Father. Pray always for a little, white dove.

Dec. 29, 1954 (SME speaks of the brilliant Light of God and seeing her own misery, yet confident in God) ...I have left myself entirely in God's Hands, for I am unable to understand myself or what is going on in me. Never in my life have I felt so helpless. I have the feeling of being stripped of everything and in the glare of a brilliant light beholding myself covered with hideous sores, as the most degrading of lepers. You may think, Father, that I am drawing an untrue picture of myself. I assure you I am not. But I have, despite the horror I feel towards myself, the greatest confidence in Our Lord. Someday, sometime, He will come and cure me and in His great mercy make me an instrument of His glory. In this, my hour of humiliation, I rejoice and thank God that, in His

mercy, He does not spare me... God bless you, Father. Pray for a little dove who seems to have lost the use of its wings. Could anything be more helpless?

April 12, 1955, Ottawa, Ohio – (SME speaks of darkness of soul and an evil encounter. Her offering to Our Lord in advance the sacrifice of being deprived of the help of her beloved confessor) ...Before your first letter & package arrived I was in such a state that I began wondering why I was in Religious life at all. I was in such darkness, such absolute misery, I couldn't even think straight. It seemed to me, Father, as though I were in a complete night. I have never gone through anything like it before. My mind, my imagination, my heart, my soul, every part of me seemed enveloped in an evil blackness in which no light penetrated. At the same time a voice, filled me with terror, a voice that kept repeating, "You are a fraud. You know you are and so does Father. The next time he writes he will tell you so. He will no longer have anything to do with you. Then what will you do. You are a fraud." There was only one thing for me to do. I cast myself into the Merciful Heart of Our Lord. I told Him that if He willed to deprive me of your help which means so much to me, I would accept the cross, provided He gave me the necessary strength to do so. It would have been one of the hardest trials of my life. If I would be a person who could talk to anybody or everybody it would be different, but knowing me as you do, you can imagine Father what it meant for me to offer, beforehand, this sacrifice to our Lord. I was so bewildered and confused at this time, I didn't know what was wrong with me. I was in such agony of soul, it seemed I couldn't understand anything anymore. And the most painful part of this trial is that you can't reach the (the) suffering to ease it in any way. I have been in darkness, more or less, this whole year, but this was the worst yet, and I know it will come back again. Anyway while this was going on, your package and letter arrived. When I saw the package, the thought came to me, "Those are the Notes. Father has sent them back to me." When I opened it and saw what it was you can imagine what I felt. And surely our Lord must have inspired you to write what you did, all about the agony in the garden. It was what I needed so much at that very moment. Your words were a God-send to my troubled soul. I will never forget them. Then you wonder if your letters do me any good. You see now what they do for me...

May 16, 1955, Ottawa, Ohio – (SME seeks to honor Our Lord on the anniversary of her Mystical Marriage with Him, as a little bride of His Heart. She ponders Words of Our Lord in times of darkness, recognizing her misery and nothingness, looking at herself in the Eyes of God) The "poor little, scrub sister," knows that all she has, all that has been given to her, is a pure gift of God. His is the glory. Without Him, I am nothing... Do you suppose you could say a little extra prayer for me on a couple of my Big Days? I hope I am not being troublesome Father. If I am, you know you have only to tell me. As I am writing this in the evening with no typewriter handy I'll have to print the dates with my pen. I hope you won't mind. I don't know the date of the Mystical Marriage, so ask you to supply it, and, if it isn't asking too much, Father will you send the date of that to me, if I marked it? I should like to offer Our Lord a special act of thanksgiving on that day for the privilege of being His special bride, the little bride of His Heart. The other morning as we were at the breakfast table, I was thinking of how long it took me to learn anything spiritual when suddenly Our Lord said to me, "*I am thy Teacher. My Heart is thy school. Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart.*" Then it came home to me, Father, that to become like Christ, to learn the lesson of His Heart, we have but to practice meekness and humility. It is not easy, but it is worth every effort, because it knits us so closely to the Heart of Mercy. There are times Father, like right now, when my courage all but fails me. But Our Lord sometimes in these moments extends a helping hand. One time, just a short time ago, he said to me, "*I am thy Light and thy Strength. I will make the way clear for thee and give thee courage to walk upon it.*" So when the darkness comes, thicker than usual I think and ponder over these words. Also I read over your letters trying to make good use of the advice and help given therein. You can't imagine how much they have and continue to help me. If ever I felt like a failure, I feel it now. I am crushed underneath the weight of my own misery, sinfulness and complete lack of virtue. At least I cannot see any virtue in myself. God be praised for letting me feel what a wretched and ungrateful creature I am. Someone, reading this may think I am only trying to appear humble. No, I recognize my misery and my nothingness and from the depths

of my heart I know that this is so. When you look at yourself through the Eyes of God, Father, you see yourself as you never did before and you marvel at God's patience with so miserable a creature.

July 30, 1955 (SME willingly offers the complete sacrifice of not seeing her own beloved mother for the cloister) Rev. & dear Father, I told my mother, my very dear mother about the Cloister. It was a bit hard because she gets so much joy out of seeing and speaking to me. But because she herself loves God so much I knew she would accept this sacrifice in that spirit of strong faith that has always been the mainspring of her whole life. It will be hard for me too as I so dearly love my mother. My father has already gone to God. So I know, where he is, he will smile down upon my little cell and will enjoy the added happiness of a second sacrifice. Mother will miss my visits to her but since New Riegel is not far from Cleveland she will be able to come down now and then. You know, Father, that I would be willing to make the complete sacrifice of never seeing or speaking to my mother again if our Lord really wanted it. But so far He has not asked it as I shall take advantage of His goodness and be a consolation to her. I owe her a great debt of gratitude for I believe it was her love for and continual prayers to the Mother of God that has obtained for me so many graces. If I love our Lady so much it is because she, my mother, first taught me. God gave me wonderful parents.

Aug. 10, 1955, 402 Monroe St. Phoenix, Arizona – (SME longs to hide in the cloister)

*I saw the plains as they rolled by
The clouds adrift in a sunlit sky
And everything spoke of a sweet release
Even the sagebrush whispered, "Peace". (Poetry by SME)*

Anyway, I would greatly appreciate your prayers in my behalf. I long so much to enter the Cloister next year, if it be God's will. I want so much to hide myself. I don't know what has come over me. This urge to hide myself becomes stronger every day. It is as though something were driving me. I don't know how to explain it. I have the feeling that my time is short and there is so much yet to be done. Yet even should my life be a long one it will be far too short for all I want to do for our Lord.

Feast of St. Michael Sept. 29, 1955, 402 E. Monroe St. Phoenix, Arizona (SME notes anniversaries on Our Lady's Feast days, planned by Our Lady. Previous encounters with St. Michael. Her thirst for the cloister and being forgotten. Surrendering her letters to the judgement of the confessor) Rev. & dear Father, Since this letter will, for the most part, concern St. Michael, I was determined to get it started, at least, on his feast day. I was happy to know how much good your pilgrimage to Guadalupe did you. Our Lady, I am sure has a very special love for you. Very many thanks for your kind remembrance of me to her. I was confirmed on her feast Dec. 9, the anniversary of her first appearance to the humble Juan. Also, my very heartfelt thanks for all the little precious gifts you sent. As usual it took me by surprise. I never expected such a unique and (and) invaluable assortment. The relic of St. Ephrem was doubly welcome as it had an image of our dear Lady on the other side of its little case. How fitting, since I entered on her feast. I had wanted to enter on the 15th of Aug. Father, but things just didn't turn out that way. I didn't know, till after I was in the Convent some time, that Sept. 12th was also a feast of Our Lady. So you see, she took care of it herself, since my plans went awry.

Father, before I say anything else, I must tell you about St. Michael. I almost wasn't going to tell you but something made me change my mind. Besides I'll never have any peace until I do. It's that way with everything Our Lord wants you to know. This happened in Ottawa towards the middle of the year (1954), I think. I don't even remember the date, because I wasn't going to say anything about it. It happened on a Sunday morning. I was sitting in the room next the kitchen with the intention of saying some of my prayers. I didn't have to say them at that time but just thought it a good chance to do so. I no more than started when I saw an angel standing before me towards the left. He was dressed in a white robe or garment, perfectly plain, perfectly white. He was holding

a palm in his left hand which (the palm) was a beautiful green color. The whiteness of his robe stood out very plainly against the darkness about him. It was like a light in the midst of the darkness. I saw all this at a glance. He said to me, *“Receive the palm of victory.”* I became suspicious. I couldn’t think of any victory that I ever had that deserved such a reward. I am always wary of words of praise. It always puts me on my guard. Besides it sounded a bit silly to me. Why wasn’t the palm given to someone else more deserving of it than I. So, I shook my head and resolutely went back to my prayers. But he wouldn’t go away. He spoke again, *“You do not believe me. Will you accept the cross?”* For me, this was more familiar ground. I said yes, I would accept the cross. To which he replied, *“Then you will accept the palm and the sword. With it (the sword) the saints conquered themselves, the world and the devil. I am the Angel of Peace. I come to those whose hearts are attuned to the Voice of God. To such as these I remain a perpetual light through blinding darkness. I am sent by Him Who said, ‘I am the Light of the World.’”* I remember this Father, as though it were happening at this very moment. At the time I had no thought of St. Michael. I’m afraid I never paid too much attention to him. I did not know then who the angel was nor can I describe him as I really saw him. Unlike all pictures of him that I ever came across, he wore no armor. Although I did not see the sword at first I did see it later with the palm in his left hand when he spoke of it. That should have told me who it was, but it didn’t. I must be dense or something. Anyway I have never seen any picture like it. When I came here, Father, I wanted something special to read and somehow couldn’t find what I wanted. So in the end I chose Joan of Arc. I can see that the Holy Spirit directed me in this. Towards the end of the book I read that St. Michael is sometimes called the Angel of Peace. I never knew that. Then I understood who it was that had come to me. I knew then that I had to tell you. Some time later, while thinking this over in Chapel, I wondered why he came dressed in so different a manner than is his usual custom. While I was doing so, a voice said to me, *“I do not always come in the armor of war. Sometimes I come in the garments of peace.”* He called me *“little maid”* and *“little Joan”*. He told me the *“Big Maid”* the *“Big Joan”*, as he called her had a great battle to fight, but though it was very great, that which I must fight is yet greater as it is mainly against the powers of evil and besides the forces against all good are much greater now than they were then. While in Chapel this morning, Father, a voice said to me, *“Little white dove of Jesus, I have been sent by Him to defend you from the Powers of Evil.”* So the evil spirit won’t frighten me anymore, Father. With St. Michael around I feel very much protected. I didn’t have any medal or picture of St. Michael so I asked him to get me one or the other. About two days later I received a picture of him from another Sister in a very unexpected manner. On the eve of his feast, the temptation came to me again, that I was being deceived. This thought frightened me, as it always does. At that moment a voice said to me. *“You are not being deceived. You are too simple to be deceived.”* The temptation left me then.

Forgive me Father, for making you wait so long for this letter. I try to get it finished as fast as I can but you know what I told you about writing these things. Every time it seems to be harder. But if any of this gives glory to God and helps souls in some way, I don’t mind paying the cost. God is so good. It is only right that I should do all I can to make Him more loved. Oh Father, I so long to hide myself in the Cloister. I thirst to be forgotten. It is a desire that is deep in my heart. It has become a part of myself. So much so that if in some way sometimes I am missed or forgotten I am very happy. Father I would be glad if you would destroy all my letters except those parts relating to Our Lord’s words and the Mystical experiences which you think should be kept. Use your good judgement, Father, and do as you see fit. I know that the Holy Spirit will guide you in all this, so please feel free about it all. There are more things I must tell you about Father, but as I say in every letter, they will have to wait till next time. Father, are my letters too long? Do I take too much of your time. Please tell me. Because then I will try to make them shorter. Sister M. Linus sends best regards and many thanks for the history information. Also for the prayers. A special “hello” to Frankie, the bird with the lost voice. Pray for me always God bless you, Father Always in a little white dove. P.S. Do as you wish about the letters. It’s not for me to tell you what to do. (a big thanks again for your lovely gifts)

Dec. 6, 1955, 402 E. Monroe Phoenix, Arizona –(SME remembers the confessor’s teachings of great works accomplished through misunderstandings and sufferings, especially from otherwise good Religious, especially as

regards the cloister. She embraces the anticipation a life of more sufferings in the cloister. She sees Our Crucified Lord and shares crushingly in His Immense grief from the horror of sin, almost unto her death. An encounter with St. Gabriel, who say Our Lord wishes Sister to go to His Mother to learn great purity of heart. She speaks of the Angels and her closeness to them. She surrenders all letters to the confessor and says she only writes them because Our Lord Wishes her to) Rev. & dear Father, Greetings and prayers through the good St. Nicholas. Your letter, dear Father, was most interesting and consoling. I was especially pleased that you were able at last to visit New Riegel. I felt that it would meet with your approval. I know now that it has and I am glad. Sister Florecita has had much to suffer. As you mentioned before Father, great works always are accomplished only under misunderstanding and suffering. Most painful of all is the persecution meted out by otherwise good Religious. One very good Sister told me last year that she was going to pray that I would remain in the teaching profession. She thought it a shame that I should be thinking about entering the cloister. And she has not been the only one who thought it expressed herself this way. I know there are many who turn up their noses at the very thought of a cloister of this kind in the Community. That there will be much suffering awaiting me in the cloister, I have no doubt. I expect a much harder life than I am living now. If it would be easier, I would not seek entrance therein. Many thanks for the holy pictures, Father. The one of St. Michael, with the prayer, I keep in my cell. I say the prayer on my knees at night, before going to bed. I had a heart-breaking experience on Nov. 1st, the great feast of All Saints. We are allowed to take a little rest on Sundays and Feast days if we feel the need for it. So this weak creature takes advantage of this now and then. I did so on this feast day morning. I had awakened after a time and was about to get up when I fell into one of those trance-like conditions of which I already spoke to you about. The Crucifix appeared before me drawing closer and closer. I knelt down, my heart crying out in sorrow and love. He was very near, so near that I saw the Blood streaming down His crucified and pain-wracked body. On His Face was a look of intense pain and sorrow. I offered myself to Him with all the love of my heart. Then He spoke these words to me – *“I cannot accept your gift unless you are wholly united to Me and to My sufferings”* At these words I was overwhelmed with grief. Then the Lord proceeded to lead me upon the road of suffering. Never, dear Father, have I ever experienced anything so terrible, so heartrending, so full of bitterness, I was filled with such anguish and agony that every part of my soul and body seemed to share in it. I could not kneel upright, a heavy weight seemed to be pressing me down to the ground. The agony was becoming unbearable. With both hands I covered my face, while the intense suffering forced the tears from my eyes. I felt like I was being crushed under a mountain of grief. There was no part of me that this agony did not penetrate. If it had lasted a moment longer I’m sure I would have died. Oh if I could only tell you how it really was. When I awoke, I was shivering and trembling all over. Oh the horror of sin, if only we fully realized it. Our Lord only let me taste a very tiny drop of the bitter drink in His chalice of suffering. Yet this tiny drop almost killed me. That is true, Father. I could not have endured it a second longer.

I would have made this letter shorter, Father, as I wanted to send it off as soon as possible, but Sister M.L. asked if she could send a few lines along so I’ve held it back. This then gives me the chance to tell you of another experience I had under similar circumstances as the above. It was the eve of the P. of Mary. I found myself in a small room, strange and unknown to me. As I was looking around in a rather bewildered fashion I sensed another presence come into the room. I turned toward the doorway and standing near to the front of me stood an angel. He was dressed in white but his garments were arranged in a difficult manner than those of St. Michael. Although the room was very light I saw a bright halo surround his head. His arms were extended, bent at the elbows, his fingers pointing upwards. A sort of supernatural dread came over me. I knelt down, then asked him, *“Who are you?”* He replied, *“I am the Angel Gabriel. I have come to tell you that Our Lord is pleased with your effort to do good. He asks that you go to His Mother and learn great purity of heart.”* I awakened gradually, the image of the Angel so impressed upon my mind, that he was as a living person beside me. I can still see him now as I write, as vividly as I saw him then. Although the two Archangels were dressed in a similar fashion there was a marked difference between them. Oh Father, how I love the Holy Angels. They are more real to me than the good people I live with. How much they love us. If only we appreciated them more. If you ever think of it when you happen

to write to Fr. Wolfer, will you extend to him my congratulations and prayers? Thank you so much. Father if there's too much of self in what I write, please let me know. And also please, please destroy anything that would in any way put me to the fore front. I want to be as forgotten as possible. I only write what I do because He wishes it and because it will redound to His glory and the salvation of souls. Please pray that I may learn how to suffer. I'm not very good at it. God bless you Father – a little white dove

April 12, 1956 (Sent by Our Lord, Angels help SME more frequently as evil attacks increase, which sometimes St. Michael prevents) Rev. & dear Father, It seems that since the attacks of the evil spirit are becoming more frequent and violent, Our Lord in His mercy has been sending me more often than ever the special help of the angels, especially St. Michael. He has come to me many times since that day when he told me that our Lord had sent him to protect me against the powers of evil. He has become my constant companion. If I do not see him, I feel him. He does not always prevent the devil from attacking me, although at times he does. Mostly he stays in the background. Sometimes I wonder where he is when suffering and praying I seek his aid. Then when it is over he comes and smiles at (at) me as if to say, *“That was a good fight and all is well now.”* then my courage returns and I try to behave valiantly, Father, but I'm afraid I'm a very poor specimen of a soldier... I found it impossible to tell you everything in this letter. Oh Father If only I could tell you these things in a more intelligent manner, instead of stumbling around as I do trying to find words and expressions that would give you a truer picture of the beauty I see and the sorrow the joy, the pain, the mixed feelings that always accompany them.

Aug 9, 1956 (1st letter with same date-below) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio – (SME says Our Lord is the Object of all her desires, bearing a distinct pain of love. She speaks with Rev. Mother, the cloister continues to be delayed. She makes the sacrifice of not entering the Cloister to Our Lord and is content with the Cloister of the Divine Heart, even celebrates with Our Lord over the sacrifice. She speaks to Jesus of Rev. Leibold, Who then Smiles) The retreat was very good, Father, and our Lord showered His graces on me. He is my one Reality, the Object of all my desires. I love Him so much it has become a distinct pain, different from any other and it never leaves me. The other day, in my cell, I was reading a book on St. Thomas Aquinas. It described at this certain point, or tried to rather, the goodness of God, His love and mercy. I looked up and saw Our Lord looking at me. Then I cried, Father, cried because I couldn't stand the pain of it. I felt that my love was so small and I wanted it to be big, immense all-consuming. And here I was, a very small sister, insignificant with just a small heart. As it is, Father, I cannot understand how such a small heart can contain so much love and not break altogether. I had a talk with Rev. Mother the other day from which I gathered there would be no cloister for me this year and the way I'm beginning to feel about it, maybe never. Perhaps that is the way God wants it. Like the sacrifice, more or less, of my talents and capabilities, maybe God wants the sacrifice of this too. I came away from my talk with Mother in a cloud of pain and misunderstanding and yet I never felt more contented. Our Lord conferred on me at that moment a great grace. His Will and mine have at last become entirely one. In the Cloister of His Heart I find all I need. What better place can I spend the last years of my life. Would I want to be at New Riegel if His Will did not want me there? You see, Father, I'm beginning to get a little sense in my head for a change. Rev. Mother was very kind, she always is, but I knew she had not understood me. That was not her fault. God wished it that way for His Own purpose. When I spoke of being united to Our Lord's Will, Father, I did not mean that I had not been conformed to it before, but there was something in it that was missing. Now there isn't. After leaving Mother's office I went to the Chapel and through my tears smiled at Jesus. Then I said, *“It's all right dear Lord, just push me in the corner. Just so you come forth and make yourself known and loved.”* Then I went to my cell and took out some candy that had been given me. I said to Our Lord, *“Dear Lord, this calls for a celebration and since I know you won't eat any of this candy I'll have to eat two pieces, yours and mine.”* And that's just what I did Father. You see, Jesus and I have good times together. The more I am ignored, passed over, forgotten, the attention Jesus gives me is all the more frequent and loving, and for that reason, all the more painful as I fall so short of the love I so desire to give Him. The other morning I was very weary and my head ached. *After Communion Jesus took me in His arms and told me to rest on His breast and*

listen to the beatings of His Heart. O Father, the love of Jesus for us! He sympathizes with all our sorrows and smiles with us in our joys. We mean so much to each other, Jesus and I. And *oh Father, how much He loves you. I know, because whenever I speak to Him of you He smiles.*

Forgive me Father, here I go taking up your precious time again. God bless you always. Respectfully, in Our Lord, Sister M. Ephrem

Aug. 9, 1956 (2nd letter same date above) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio –(SME acknowledges a holy love for Rev. Leibold and her “I love you’s” for Jesus) ... Please forgive me Father. I feel it very much when I can’t see or talk with you for a long time. When I am with you all my fears seem to melt away. What before was a mountain, becomes an ant-hill, and all I need do is step over it. With you I am never embarrassed or ill at ease. You calm and steady me in a manner that no one else does. When I am silent, at times, you understand. You know that my silence speaks to you just as eloquently as my words, more so perhaps. But it is not only because of all this that I enjoy visiting you, but because, just because you are Father Leibold and I love you very much. When I tell this to Our Lord He just smiles. And I know why too. It’s because He loves you also, much, much more than I or anyone else ever could. Because I love you, I ask Our Lord to give you many special graces and He does, I know He does. I used to think that loving Our Lord ruled out loving anyone else in a special way. But it is not so. Our Lord has taught me how to love. So I can say, “*I love you, Father,*” and take nothing away from Our Lord, remaining wholly His. One must reach a certain stage in the spiritual life before one can love truly love another yet belong to God Alone. So this letter is only for your eyes, Father. Anyone else reading it wouldn’t understand at all, at least most people wouldn’t. They would think me foolish and silly. How scandalized they would be that I loved a priest. People just don’t understand love at all, Father. If only they would let Jesus teach them. *I tell Jesus over and over again how much I love Him. And He likes it too.* He tells me so. If I feel the need to tell you once in a while that I love you, Father, do you mind very much? Please don’t mind. I can see you smiling and maybe shaking your head over this strange creature God has placed in your care. You are so dear to His Heart so why shouldn’t you be to mine? What a scribble this letter is, Father I hope you won’t have too much trouble reading this. It really is a jumble isn’t it? God bless you, Father, a little, white dove feels most safe in your keeping. Pray for me.

Aug. 16, 1956 Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio (Jesus made known to SME the Sorrow of His Heart over the ingratitude and indifference shown to Him in the Sacrament of His Love on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, He asks her to continue to wear the crown of thorns and to be nailed to the Cross, and He Speaks of the Humility of His Heart) ... This being the eve of the First Friday I am reminded of some things that should have been mentioned before this. I was, as you know, still out West, in June. Well, June 8th, Feast of the Sacred Heart, we were allowed to make a night hour, those who wished too. During this time *Jesus made known to me the sorrow of His Heart over the ingratitude and indifference shown to Him in the Sacrament of His love.* When I went back to bed, *Jesus came to me holding a large cross and a crown of thorns. He said to me, smiling, as though He knew what the answer would be (He did, of course) “So I come with My Cross and My crown (of thorns.) Will you accept Me, My spouse?”* You know the only answer I could give, Father. Who can refuse Jesus anything? During the night I awoke and Jesus said to me, and He said it with a profound emphasis, “*I have placed you upon the altar of sacrifice.*” June 4th, anniversary of my perpetual union with Jesus, He asked me again, “*Bride of My Heart, do you still wish to suffer all things to give me to souls?*” I answered, “*Yes, yes, dear Lord, I am poor and wretched and unworthy but you know what is in my heart.*” Then He said, “*My little, white dove, will you then continue to wear the crown of thorns and permit yourself to be nailed to the Cross?*” I told Him in the best way I could how much I desired Him to do with me just as He desired. So in this way are my desires wholly united to His. When I received my last Obedience, Father, it was a bit of a let-down, as you can guess. Yet I tried to rise above my feelings realizing that God works all things for our good and His glory. I am glad that our Lord is not afraid to use me in any way He pleases. There are times when pain blurs my vision a bit, but it is not long before His enlightening grace makes me see again with that clear light God

reserves for the lowly and pure of heart. At this time, Father, Our Lord assured me of His continued help. He said to me that very evening after I had received the Obedience, *“I will be with you wherever you are, spouse of My Heart. You have nothing to fear.”* This was after I had said to Him, *“Dear Lord, what are You doing to me?”* Here are some words of Our Lord spoken to me since. Sometimes He repeats or uses similar expressions to emphasize the special lesson He wishes to impart. Pride must be the great sin of our times, or at least one of the great ones, for Our Lord speaks so often about humility. *“My Heart speaks to the humble. It is they who hear My Voice. “Be humble, My children, be humble and pure of heart. Then will I come and dwell with you.” “My little, white dove, how humility and simplicity are despised by the proud of this world. Oh what a loss they suffer. For despising the humble they despise Me and someday I, the humble Christ will judge them.” “By My humility and simplicity of Heart I glorified My Father more than all the Angels and Saints together. So it is that the humble soul glorifies God more than all the great of the world.”*

Oct. 15, 1956, Rome City Indiana Kneipp Springs The Sisters of the Precious Blood Rome City, Indiana – **(At this point, Our Lady has begun Her Apparitions to SME. Sister is burdened with the secret and seeks her confessor)** Father, many things have happened since I last spoke to you. I have much to tell you. Our Lady made me promise. It’s most important. I will feel better after I have it off my mind. If only it were possible to see you soon, dear Father. It is hard to carry such a burden alone. Pray for me. I must not fail the Holy Virgin. You will no doubt recognize the waitress in the snapshot. I’ve been helping serve table while here at Rome City. Maybe you wouldn’t believe it Father, but it was a real penance for me to go among the people like that. I prefer corners where nobody notices me – dark corners, but I accept whatever God decrees and have learned to do it with a smile. God bless you, Father. Pray for a very small sister, Sister M. Ephrem

Nov. 28, 1956, The Sisters of the Precious Blood St. Joseph College Collegeville, Indiana **(SME begins to reveal the Mother of God’s Plan and it’s tremendous importance. She suffers intensely over things, yet with peace and loving closeness to Our Lady. Sister realizes the difficulties that will come to Rev. Leibold with these revelations, the official manner of Our Lady’s Apparitions. SME speaks of an inner vision, which she has been experiencing for some time with Our Lord, the Angels, etc. She put together a booklet, yet she still awaits the great disclosure to her confessor)** Rev. & dear Father, Your very welcome letter did much to encourage me. You don’t know how much encouragement I need these days, everything seems so out of line and yet it isn’t. Do I make any sense? From what has happened since I last saw you, it no longer surprises me that things are going the way they are. It seems that the dear Mother of God had quite a big task on her mind. She has been revealing it to me bit by bit. As it is, the very scope of it and its tremendous importance tends to frighten me in such a way that I’ve been tempted more than once to tear everything up, destroy every bit of writing. I’ve tried to convince myself that the whole thing is an illusion, the effects of my imagination and emotions. Yet Father, it is very strange. Whenever I’m about to tear up, destroy what has been written, something deep inside of me tells me I may not, I must not. Something or maybe it is Someone, prevents it every time.

Because of all this I have suffered intensely and yet, never have I had such peace, never have I felt Our Lady so close to me and never have I loved her so much as I do now. I used to grieve over what I considered my lack of love for her. Now it is as though she has come from a long journey and we are united at last. O what a Mother she is. I cannot express my feelings towards her, they are beyond words. The dear Lady expressed her desire that I tell you everything. When I told her what a lot of trouble it would probably get you into, she said, with every mark of confidence, *“He will not mind the trouble, for he loves me also.”* So what could I do Father, please, you don’t mind, do you? I don’t care about myself, but I should feel very badly if you had to suffer on my account. As for our dear Mother, you and I would both die for her if need be, that is certain. I do not think these revelations will surprise you. You must have sensed something was about to happen. Remember when you told me about the children of Fatima and how the angel prepared them? I didn’t suspect anything. Never did it enter my mind that Our Lady would come to me, that is, in an official manner. I must be very dull or something. Every new grace,

every new experience always comes as a complete surprise to me. It is only afterwards that realization breaks upon me and I become rather frightened at it all. Then I try to make myself believe it was all made up somehow or other, but it doesn't work, because deep within me I know this isn't so. *The "inner vision" by which I see, Father, is so clear that it seems as though even my bodily eyes partake of this "seeing".* I wish this could be expressed more intelligently, Father, but it's the best this small one can do. The light of Truth, how bright it is, and how clearly it reveals everything. I was hoping to see you soon so everything could be placed into your keeping, but as it is I will try to inform you as well as I can on the latest happenings between Heaven and this poor one of the earth. The rest I will leave for when I can be with you once more. Be free to ask any questions you wish Father, I will try to answer them as well as I can. As you can see I had these notes in a loose-leaf book. Instead of rewriting them, which would have consumed too much time, I tried to make it into a little booklet. It isn't a very neat job, Father, forgive me, but I am anxious to get it out of my hands. You don't know how often I've been tempted to destroy the whole thing. Just this evening I've felt an overwhelming urge to do so. If you feel it should be destroyed, Father, it is up to you. I would rather die than deceive anyone. And yet I can't get the certainty of the Truth out of my heart. What is wrong with me, Father? I didn't know the crown of thorns could hurt so much. Rev. Mother was just here for a short while today. I was told that most likely I will make the retreat at Dayton from Dec. 26 to Jan 1 – then to Cin. So I guess I'll be here a couple weeks yet. Be in Dayton perhaps a week before Christmas. I have begged Our Lady to prepare you for the Great Disclosure! My deepest gratitude for your prayers and the prayercards you sent. Pray much for me. A little, white dove is greatly in need of this blessed manna. God bless you Father, sme

Feb. 11, 1957 – (location not noted) – (SME sees Our Lady and St. Joseph, and according to Our Lady's wishes, sister places the purity of her body, soul, mind and heart into St. Joseph's keeping. Our Lady instructs, and has sister write) ...I am writing it on my knees. Just a moment ago Our Lady said to me, *"My child, I place your purity into the hands of my glorious Spouse, St. Joseph."* As she said this she glanced from me to him. St. Joseph smiled. They were both smiling. This made me very happy. I then, in accordance with Our Lady's wish, placed the purity of my body, soul, mind and heart into the keeping of her Holy Spouse. Our dear Lord so loves them both that it is a great joy to Him when we place ourselves so entirely into their keeping. As He was kept safe in their care, so shall we be. Oh if only we had more confidence in Mary and Joseph. How much closer we would be to Jesus. Our dear Lady told me on the morning of Feb. 3rd, which fell on a Sunday, that she would have much to tell me that day. I was to hold myself in readiness and pay attention for when she spoke. I am quite scatter-brained sometimes Father, so that Our Lady has to call me to task now and then. So later on in the morning, when I came to my room, there was that definite feeling that I should sit down and write. Our Lady was ready and waiting. But I had no inclination to sit down and write. There were other things I wanted to do. I dawdled around, trying to get out of it more or less. By that time, Our Lady decided she had best take me in hand. So she said, a bit sternly, I felt, *"Sit down, my child, and write my words."* Well, Father, I sat down quickly and wrote as she desired. *"My Son asks of souls, love, that true love willing to sacrifice itself for the One loved. Man fears to sacrifice himself because he is selfish. If souls would place themselves into my keeping, I would teach them the way of true love. If men truly loved my Son they would not quarrel among each other and they would have peace in their own hearts. Peace is from within, not from without. If mankind were at peace with Itself there would be peace in the world. Man will only have peace if he has in his heart that true love of neighbor that springs from a whole-hearted love for my Son. My sweet child, if love does not have its roots implanted deeply within the soul, it will die out, or be uprooted by the first storm that besets it. Oh child of my Pure Heart, tell my children to come to me and learn this true love of my Son which is so necessary for their peace of mind."* Sometime later the same day Our Lady spoke again. *"Reform of life is what I ask as the sign and proof of my children's love for me. God looks at the heart, and if it resembles the Heart of His Divine Son it is with the greatest pleasure He regards it. But to make our hearts grow more and more like to the Heart of the Son, you must go to the Mother whose heart is most like His. From this pure and Immaculate Heart you will learn all that will make you more pleasing to the Divine Heart of the Son of God. The Holy Trinity looks down with Infinite delight upon such souls and makes*

them Its heaven upon earth. Come to me, my children, come to me and learn. There is much I would teach you. It is for your own happiness and eternal salvation. Do not disregard the voice of your Mother. It is the voice of love striving to save you from eternal ruin."

Feb. 3, 1957 (same letter as Feb. 11, 1957 with this date added) (SME expresses concern for her confessor and ask his prayers for her; she expresses how greatly she loves Our Lady) Please, Father, if the carrying out of Our Lady's wishes makes it necessary to divulge of anything concerning what I have written to you, please do as you think best. I do not wish to tie your hands in any way. I'm sure it is hard enough for you. I don't want to make it more difficult by putting any restraint upon you. Oh how I love her, how I love Our Lady. God bless you, dear Father. May the smile of "Our" Beautiful One, ever brighten your way and make easier the tasks that lie ahead. Pray for Your very small child in the Divine Heart Sister M. Ephrem

April 25, 1957 (SME expresses her wretchedness, yet profound peace and being loved. Additional Apparition of OLA. Our Lady Speaks of Rev. Leibold and sister explains Our Lady's life of love and that She Wants this love for Her children. Additional Apparitions of Our Lady noted) Dear Father, Easter morning, Our Lady told me that, just as she experienced great joy in the resurrection of her Son on that first Easter long ago, so now she rejoiced over the resurrection of many souls to a new life, filled with God's grace. Although it seemed to me, Father, that I spent Lent in a most wretched and cowardly manner, it pleased the good God to notice only the sincerity of my poor heart. For after Holy Communion Easter morning my soul was filled with so profound a peace that it permeated my whole being. I felt, using the words of St. Thérèse, that 'I was much loved.'

(...) Father, Our Lady does not mean to imply, in her words of loving reproach, that there are not many good people in the world. No, she is only asking for a greater, a more intense love on our part. She knows that great love steals the Heart of God and she begs us to do this, that we may live in It forever. That was her life always and she wants it to be ours also. Oh if only we knew better how to love.

(...) *Lovely Lady, Hear our prayer Help your children Everywhere. Bless us now, Yes everyone. Bring us to Your loving Son. And when the day Of life is o'er, Lead us to The Eternal Shore.* (How I love her, Father. She is truly our way to Jesus)

May 29, 1957 (SME predicts she may not be alive to see Our Lady's Plans completed but they will be completed. Clearly expressing or explaining her experiences is her difficulty. Sister only wants the Will of God and His Good Pleasure) Rev. & dear Father, A happy feast, and special prayers too, thank the ascended King and His Holy Mother. I cannot tell you how grateful I am for your visit and the help you gave me. Impatience is only one of my many faults. I see my mistake clearly now. As for "the Lady", she is not impatient, but only wishes to remind us of the shortness of time and the crying need which is ours today. If her words contain an urgency, bordering perhaps on a certain impatience or anxiety, it is only that she does not want us to forget how much she longs to help us and bring us closer to her Son. The Holy Virgin has since told me of the pleasure you have given her in striving to carry out at least some of her requests, those you feel you are able to at this time. She does not expect the impossible. When the time comes she will take care of it herself, in her own way. It will come, that is sure. It may well be this small one will not live to see it. But that doesn't matter. "She must increase, I must decrease." There is need of Our Lady but not of me, that is certain. It is so nice, Father, to be a nothing. I cannot imagine being anything better. I love the "hidden corners." The smaller I become, the easier do I fit into them. Many thanks for the booklets. I read and looked them over carefully, also your letter. I see there is need of more explanation on my part. If only this poor one could put down on paper – "*as clearly as she sees them*". You know Father that God's Will is everything to me. If there is any turmoil it is only on the surface. It is quickly gone, leaving no ill effects behind. I love Him too much ever to wish for something that would be in any way contrary to His Will and Good Pleasure. I am all His so why can't He do with me what He wants to. So that is why my heart is always at peace even though there are minor earthquakes on top. God bless you for your great kindness and patience. May Our Lady send her special blessing to "her favored son." Pray for a little white dove

June 5, 1957 Our Lady: (Our Lady tells SME that her mission reaches to the ends of the earth and will continue until time is no more. The humble, so greatly loved by God are, in deed and in truth, Our Lady's children) **"Your mission is vast, my child. It reaches to the ends of the earth. It will continue until time is no more,** because there will always be the need for the sanctification of the family and of souls. Fear not, small one, for it is through the most unlikely of instruments that God works His wonders. He chooses where the world would not. He makes that possible what the world deems impossible. He stops, where the world would pass on. God has no need of anyone yet He chooses the smallest of the small for His glory. Sweet child, let your humble heart be filled with a great confidence for my Son is in love with your lowliness and simplicity of heart. Make known to souls the preference my Son has for humility. Behold, I, His humble Mother, always looked upon myself as His lowly Handmaid, ready, at all times, to do His bidding. The humble, so greatly loved by Him, are also, in deed and in truth, my children."

July 1, 1957 – (letter date 7.5.57) Bishop George J. Rehring acknowledges formal opening of the New Riegel Cloister

Aug. 28, 1957 (Our Lady spoke of the Divine Indwelling, Her very Life while on earth. In a letter dated 8.22.57, Our Lady said to sister, "Go to the Bishop. Tell him of the desires of my Heart. He will help you." In this letter sister expresses her weakness yet willingness due to her sympathy towards Our Lady and Her waiting) Rev. & dear Father, On the feast of Our Lady of the Snows, in the evening, as I knelt in my room, "the Lady" spoke to me about the Divine Indwelling. It was her life and she lived it perfectly, always conscious of His Presence, never forgetting that all her greatness came from within, from Him Who dwelt there, working, loving and doing good through her. The thoughts I wrote down as I knelt there took the form of a sort of prayer, but it was meant more as a prayerful meditation on the thoughts of which Our Lady seemed at the time to be deeply occupied. Though the serenity never left her countenance, she spoke with a gravity that made her words all the more solemn. She seemed anxious to impress upon me some idea of the greatness of this gift of God to us – His Divine Presence within our soul through sanctifying grace. Oh Father, I have no desire to go to the Bishop. But there is no way out, not that I'm really looking for one. Don't think for a moment that I'm feeling sorry for myself. No, not at all. My sympathy is for the "Lady". She is trying so hard to help us, and we, especially myself, do bungle things up so. If we would only mind our Mother. She does love us so much. I'm not only willing but happy to stay here Father, as long as Our Lord and His Mother wish it. Sometimes I get a little fussy on the surface but that's as far as it goes, no deeper. Our Lord lets me keep my failings in order that I may always remain humble. This makes me very happy as I know then that nothing can separate me from Him. God bless you Father – Pray always for, His little, white dove.

Sept. 29, 1957 (SME humbly and playfully thanks and encourages her confessor. She speaks of Our Lady's reproach. Self-denial and submission to her confessor) Rev. & dear Father, Just a few lines to thank you for all your kindnesses in my behalf. It is certain that a certain "little sister", gives you many opportunities of practicing heroic patience. Anyway it is not only this poor one who is grateful, but "the Lady" too, because in doing so, you prepare the way for her to do her work. Not all instruments are easy to handle. Our Mother will reward you for the help you give her in keeping this small tool in shape and always ready for her to use. Father, I am too sensitive and inclined to get fussy over nothings, for which our Mother has gently yet firmly reproached me on more than one occasion. But this time she was more direct and to the point. So Father I am really trying very hard to stop getting upset over trifles. Just as Our Lord assured me so she has also, that she "holds me in her heart" and (she) doesn't want me to forget it. I am always very grateful Father for any correction you give me on anything at all you feel is needed or necessary. Please do so always. There will ever be a need for it, as I am very imperfect and so lacking in virtue. I am certain that no one in all the world, had they received the graces I have received would be as unworthy of them as myself. This is not only something on paper, Father, or a desire to make you think I

am humble. No, oh no. It is the truth as I believe it to be and see it in the clear and unmistakable image of myself in the mirror of an honest self-knowledge. There is no desire on my part to “cover up” and thus make myself appear other than what I am. Father, in order to practice more self-denial, I do not eat or drink or eat anything between meals, which we are otherwise allowed. Also am cutting down on the things liked better than others. Of course when we have company or the rest of the Community does so on special occasion, I do also, because it would not be right for me to be singular. If you have any suggestions or advice in regard to this or of anything else, please tell me as I will do whatever you think best. Father, do you think you could see to it that Bishop gets the Notes, those that you feel he should have? You know what he will need. Keep back whatever you feel would not be necessary for him to have. The more I’m kept out of it the better. The reason I suggested the first part of the above is that it appears Bishop prefers others come to him rather than that he goes to them, so maybe it would be better if you made the first move. But do as you judge best. God keep you always. Gratefully, Your small daughter S.M.E.

Oct. 9, 1957, J.M.J. (Our Lady manifests Her acceptance of Sister’s sacrifice. Sister suffers desolation of spirit beyond human understanding. Her sufferings vanish with the Presence of Our Lady. Sister recognizes her nothingness and the tremendous Mission, which she wholly accepts this Mission for which, in her nothingness, she was born. Our Lady Speaks of this Grave Mission) Rev & dear Father, You remember about the blue rosary Father. How our Lady asked the sacrifice of it. Well after doing so, the next time she came to me I noticed her holding one exactly like it. I couldn’t help observing, “Oh Mother, you have the blue rosary.” She smiled and assured me, that it was a sign that she had graciously accepted my sacrifice and wished in this way to acknowledge it. So ever since then whenever she comes holding a rosary they are of a blue color as described. On the eve of this last First Friday and the following morning I suffered a desolation of spirit beyond anything I could ever describe. The agony I suffer at these times is such that it gives the feeling of almost complete despair. Such mental torture and bitterness Father overwhelms me that it leaves me completely crushed. It gives one the feeling of being one bleeding wound both physically and spiritually. Worse than that it gives the feeling as though one has died, in mind, heart and soul. What I have tried to describe Father is as nothing to the reality. It stopped as suddenly as it came. Saturday morning, just before the time for rising, Our Lady came and smiled on me. All the grief I had previously suffered seemed but a strange dream that vanished in the sunshine of her smile. On the eve and also the feast of the Most Holy Rosary Our Lady obtained for me very special graces for which I was in great need. First of all, as you know Father, **I couldn’t seem to be able to reconcile myself to the fact that God should choose such a nothing like me for so great and tremendous a mission.** It seemed so impossible to me that I was often plagued with the thought that I was being deceived, that I was nothing but a fraud, a victim of my own imagination and self-love. Yet the strange thing was, deep down in my soul, I knew this was not so, as I would rather die than be guilty of such things and thus become a stumbling block to others. I knew, in spite of these temptations that harassed me, that I lived in the Truth and eventually this truth would free me from these chains. What suffering this caused me, what heaviness of heart, but always turned to Our Lady with the conviction that through her, help would be given me. It was not in vain I entrusted my cause to her. **On her feast of the holy rosary, the grace and light that flooded my soul marked the beginning of a new phase in my life. I have accepted wholly and entirely the role God has destined for me.** There is no longer any question in my mind, that **it was for this I was born, and for this I must spend myself. I will always be a nothing, yet a nothing full of confidence in Him Who chooses ‘the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and the weak things of this world to confound the strong’.** For it is not right that ‘flesh should glory in His sight. How happy I am to be such a nothing, to be counted as naught, ‘Hide me away, my God, I am only fit to be hidden away in some dark corner, unseen by anyone but You.’” While I was praying an extra rosary on the feast Our Lady said to me: ***“I have graced you with my perpetual presence because your mission is a grave one and you will be in constant need of my help.”*** I often wondered at the grace of her constant presence. God bless you Father, and please pray for your small daughter, S. M. Ephrem

Nov. 17, 1957 (SME prays for openness to receive the ongoing heavenly visitations. She expresses the need for detachment even from these extraordinary occurrences. At the request of Our Lady, sister writes rosary meditations and leaves all to the good judgement of the confessor) ...I'm on my way to make the Retreat at Maria Stein, 18th to the 24th. Just received notice the other day to do so. It will be a time of great grace, I know, so pray, dear Father, that my soul may always be wide open to receive the heavenly visitations. It is a strange thing Father, or maybe it isn't, but all the manifestations, extraordinary experiences, etc. that have been and are continuing to be my lot according to God's plan, seem to be things more or less apart from myself. What I mean is, there has developed in me and these extraordinary events an indifference that wholly detaches me from them and leaves me in that total freedom wherein I am able to love God wholly for Himself Alone and to possess and behold Him in that dark light of faith wherein is contained His true Image. I can truthfully say that I never really desired the extraordinary or ever expected to receive such. At the same time when God, in accordance with His Good Pleasure, bestowed them upon me, He gave me the grace to recognize the danger of becoming attached to them. It is on the path of faith that sanctity is reached and I do not feel that it is good for souls to desire the extraordinary. There are too many dangers connected with them. In most cases, it seems to me, or maybe I should say, in many cases, it is the self-satisfaction they render that makes them sought after even by holy persons. There is a subtle danger here that is most often not detected except by those whose deep simplicity and lowliness of heart make them immune to it, for these seek only the Good Pleasure of God, not their own. I have at last finished the little Rosary Meditations Father that Our Lady had asked me to write. Please forgive the way they are written. As usual it all had to be done in a hurry between times. Hope you won't have too much trouble reading them. Though they were addressed to me, Father, they are really for everyone, as Our Lady made known to me. She wished thus to reach all souls who devoutly pray her rosary. So, Father, if you wish to leave out the personal, like, "sweet child", "beloved daughter", etc. you are free to do so. That is left up to your good judgement. So do as you deem best. I know that during this Retreat Our Lady will be preparing me for something again, so please pray very much for Your very small daughter "His little, white dove"

Dec 2, 1957 (SME expresses deep understanding of the Divine Indwelling and prays for such for her confessor. Our Lady of America came as a response to the childlike devotion of Her children in America and reaches to Her children of all nations. Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling came as a Call for all to become living temples of God, to imitate Her Own Life. The Living Christ will Work within and through His children. The enemy continues attacks) Rev. & dear Father, May Our Holy Mother obtain for you an ever increasing love for her Son. If I desire for you the highest perfection it is to glorify Him Who dwells within you. As this constitutes the deepest of all happiness, this intimate relationship with Him, the Indwelling Guest, I will pray that you may be "an ever growing Son", in the life of Perfect Charity. I felt the Divine Presence so strongly during Retreat that though I should try my best to explain, it would not be possible to do so. It brought upon me a loneliness and homesickness that was deeply painful yet my soul was filled with joy. As you know, Father, when Our Lady came on Sept. 26 and spoke of herself as Our Lady of America, she did so in response to the love and desire that had reached out for this in the hearts of her children in America. It was a sign of her pleasure at the confidence Our Land place in her and as a reward for their staunch yet childlike devotion to her. They longed for this personal visit from Our Lady whether consciously or otherwise and in her kindness and mercy she responded far beyond all expectations. Oh how they will love her, Father, once they know of this, her special sign of love for them. Yet though she came in this manner as a token of her love for us Our Lady of America nevertheless welcomes her children of all Nations to her feet for there will be found true peace. The appearance of Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling is of course a call to every soul to become pure, living temples of God. Her life was very simple like ours yet in what depths of holiness she lived. Our Mother spent her life in Him, the Divine Presence within her. It is her desire that we imitate her above all in this. For He alone is our sanctification. But if ours is not a living faith, if we must feel before we truly believe, then the Divine Guest becomes a stranger to us. We shun Him, we make excuses for our bad manners for our boorishness, because we have not made ourselves acquainted enough with His interest in us. Our Lord is Someone Who lived centuries ago, one Who somehow couldn't have much sympathy for our sorrows, our

problems or our joys. We forget that He is the living Christ, as alive now as He was then. Our trouble is lack of faith. We do not make of Him our personal Friend, wholly and deeply interested in all our affairs. If we lived from within, in His love, we would lead much different lives from without. It is only when miracles of grace are worked inwardly that God, through us, will be able to work His miracles outwardly. Forgive me for taking your time like this Father. I never mean to write so much, but it seems once I get started it keeps going on and on. But it is so very, very important Father. It cannot be emphasized enough. Forgot to mention that two nights before the Vision of Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling I was bothered a bit by the arch-fiend of all good. Not too badly though. Getting used to it I guess. Pray for me. God bless you Father. Your very, small, daughter.

Jan. 6, 1958 (Through SME, Our Lady reveals Her unceasing care for Rev. Leibold, and asks his faithfulness to Her Cause. Sister remains aware in truth and reality of the Presence of Our Loving Mother, Who wishes us to become like Her Son. Sister writes according to the Wishes of Our Lady, including the folly of living for ourselves, rather than for God Who Created, Redeemed and Sanctifies to His Glory. Our Lady awaits the Mission and concerns Herself with sister's conformity to the Divine Will) Rev. & dear Father, Greetings through the Holy Magi. May they obtain for you abundant treasures of grace from the unlimited wealth of the Holy Family. Our Lady has many times spoken to me of her unceasing care over you and your interests, Father. She asks only one thing in return, that you continue faithful to her cause. If I could express to you the great love of this good Mother for us, her children, but how can one put into words so immeasurable a love as this. Mary is so close to me always, Father. Not a closeness of sentimentality or imagination, but a closeness in truth and reality, a oneness in love. For how can the love of a child be separated from the love of its mother. I see her in that inner light, in an interior manner which is not so much seeing, as a clear, definite, awareness of her constant presence. Yet at the same time I do see her often with the eyes of my soul, but it is not so much on this I rely as on that interior vision which depicts her to me as she truly is, not by some form by which she deigns, at certain times to appear, but in that way, which through a strong and virile faith, in unfailing light, I behold her without fear of delusion or illusion. Mary is close to all of us, Father. It is only that we do not recognize her presence or her love. We live too much on the surface, we are too earthly-minded, too self-centered. All this blurs our vision and makes seeing very difficult. Ah, our Mother sees so much good in us that's why she wants us to become better and better, because then we will become more and more like Jesus, her Son, our Brother, and thus come closer to the Sanctity of the Father. Oh, the Spirit of Jesus, how much we need It to become what we should be. We could not please our Mother more than growing continually into the likeness of Jesus. It is more safe, to be grounded in humility, in the practice of the "little virtues" which sets our steps firmly towards true Christ-likeness, than to experience visions, etc. To which we may become attached to our own detriment, and thus hinder our spiritual advancement. Forgive these ramblings, Father. There are many things that will never be written because they concern only myself and therefore Our Lady permits me to keep them to myself. But whatever I know she wishes written, that I strive to do faithfully. Whenever I meditate on the greatness and holiness of God I marvel at the goodness and patience that permits me to live. What folly to live only for ourselves. What are we but the dust under His Feet. And yet how precious is this dust to Him Who created, redeemed and sanctifies it to His glory. Blessed dust, made to His Image and Likeness, destined for eternal happiness. On the subject of the "movement" Our Lady has not revealed anything further. She seems in the attitude of waiting, yet at the same time she never permits me to forget it. She encourages me to a deeper charity, obedience and patience. She seems to be concerning herself in a special manner to my growth in virtue, a hidden life of perfect conformity to the Divine Will.

Feb. 18, 1958 (Letter of Sister Mary Ephrem to Sister Florecita, already in the Cloister. Sister Mary Ephrem has still not entered) (SME speaks of the Will of God, while awaiting entrance into the Cloister and her willingness to any task assigned her. She speaks of an awaited new Bishop) Dear Sister Florecita, I was just about to write to you when your welcome letter arrived. When Rev. Mother wrote to Sister Ludguia she also sent a note along for me. She was then with you. Mother told me, at this time I may have to wait till 'May. As God's Will is everything to me, you may be sure that I am willing to wait as long as He wishes. Even though things may not turn out as

expected, I will be content to know that His Will is being accomplished in me. I will ask Sister about those practical things you mentioned. In regard to shoes, well I've been wearing sandals most of the time. I have only one pair of shoes which I wear on Sunday's on the streets and for going out, also for Mass in the morning. My arches do bother me if I am too much on my feet, but I still prefer sandals or open shoes as my feet burn so and feel very uncomfortable in enclosed shoes. I'm sure with the flooring you are having put in I won't have any trouble on this point. By the way, are sandals alright? Rev. Mother already spoke to me about my visit home. Dear Sister please do not think I wish to do any special work in the Cloister. You know I will be most willing to help in any way possible. I'm sure I will find weaving rugs most interesting and will be happy to learn and help. You know Sister, since I am very much of the artistic temperament, I always was and always will be awkward at household tasks. I suffered much because of this since I always had to go against my natural aptitudes, to do things that naturally do not hold my interest in a way in which it would hold another more inclined to it. But all these years I have tried to do my best at it and so I hope Our Lord will accept my good will. Be assured, dear Sister, that I will do my best at whatever is assigned to me. All of us went to Bishop Isseemann's installation in Columbus except Sister Sarah. She got the Flu some days before and had to stay in. We went by Bus. So now we don't know, except for the usual rumors, who the next auxiliary Bishop or Bishops (there might be two) will be. I was glad to hear about Bishop Marling coming for July. I'll be sure to invite Msg. Leibold, as I know he would like to be present at such a ceremony as that, besides, as you know, he is very interested. I hope Sister, that you and Sister M. Leo are storing up lots of patience. Because when I come you'll need much of it until I learn weaving, etc. I'll try not to be too much of a nuisance. Think that's possible? I'll ask to write again after Lent. Hope you do the same. I appreciate your prayers so much. I do the same for you and will always continue to do so. Many thanks for the card. It does look safe and durable, doesn't it. May it bring many souls closer to God within them. God bless you both and may your love for Him lessen the fatigue of your labors. Pray always for Your little sister, Sister M. Ephrem P.S. I was sorry to hear about Sister Thea. Let us pray that whatever God's Will ordains she may have the necessary courage to accept. She is such a good sister.

Feb. 18, 1958 – (SME accepts sufferings from evil attacks that will last all through her life. Extra mortifications. Our Lord stands by her bed on Good Friday, Crowned with Thorns, and Asks sister if she too would wear a crown of thorns; provided He give her the special Graces to do so, she would be glad to suffer anything for His sake; sufferings would be mainly of the heart, soul and mind. Another evil attack and St. Michael Defends sister. She teaches the little children to have a great devotion to the Holy Angels, especially their Guardian Angel and St. Michael) ...I do not know how long this trial lasted – weeks, months. Then suddenly it stopped. But the devil was furious. Through the help of our Lord and His Holy Mother, he had lost his hold over me and had himself been defeated. He would give me a frightening remembrance of his hatred. One evening, I believe it was the same day the “ordeal” ended, as I made preparations for the night I felt his presence in my cell. I got into bed and just as I closed my eyes the “attack” began, just that suddenly. It was no dream as I was not yet asleep. It was as though two huge, horrible arms encircled themselves around me and like a monstrous vise kept tightening and tightening. I could help myself in no way except by prayer. So I cried out “Jesus!” The vise became tighter. I cried out in terror, “Jesus, Mary!” By this time the pressure, the pain became so unbearable, I was gasping for breath, but I managed to cry out one last prayer – “Jesus, Mary, Joseph!” Then just as suddenly as it started, it stopped. I opened my eyes and my soul was filled with that deep sense of peace that has since never left me. I opened my eyes to darkness but it held no terrors for me as the Phantom of Evil had fled. Our Lord has since told me that one special part of my “mission” was to make reparation for sins against the chaste virtue. He said that to do this I would have to suffer these “attacks” off and on, all through my life. He asked if I were willing. I shuddered, Father, but how could I refuse Him? He is so good, besides His grace would always be there to help me. But it is a cause of much suffering to me and mental distress. I never know when these “attacks” will come, so can do nothing but pray. These latter attacks usually last only a few moments or minutes, sometimes longer, but they always seem to last such a long time and I am always in dread of them. Although I did not know at the time just what it was I was going through, I unconsciously, or was it an inspiration, started to take upon myself extra

mortifications to back up my struggle. I tried to make them as inconspicuous as possible but when I started leaving the butter alone, one of the Sisters asked me, just in fun, if I were doing penance for her. I laughed of course and we made a joke out of it. So I was able to “cover up” and nobody was the wiser. I had rather a “hard” time during Holy week, both physically and spiritually. The night of Good Friday, Our Lord came to me and stood by my bed. He was wearing a crown of thorns and in His Hands He held another. He looked at me. Then extending it towards me He asked if I would be willing to wear it for His sake. I answered simply, that, provided He give me the special graces to do so, I would be glad to suffer anything for His sake. Then He explained to me that the suffering would be mainly of the heart, soul and mind. Easter Sunday morning I was again attacked by the evil spirit in the manner that I explained to you in the ordeal of 1950. These attacks, Father, are extremely painful to me and cause me a great deal of suffering. In the middle of this horror our Lord appeared before me showing His burning Heart. He smiled at me and in a most encouraging manner thanked me for suffering this for His Sake. Just think of it, Father, God thanking His very small creature for simply doing her duty. What exquisite manners He has. I was ashamed because I thought of the many times I neglect to thank Him for all His great mercy. Then He was gone and terror was on me again. Then suddenly it was over and I found myself, it seemed, in a very small room in what appeared was a cellar. As I sat there, facing the wall, the devil appeared and started towards me. He was very black and his eyes seemed to glow like red-hot coals of fire. Yet in my heart there dwelt a great confidence. It was not in vain. Just as the devil was about to grab a hold of me, St. Michael stood by my side and his sword flashed between, warding him off. The devil fled then and did not return. St. Michael turned and looked at me. He smiled. It was a big smile. It said very plainly – *“You did very well, now everything will be alright.”* Then suddenly I was a very small child dressed in a very white garment and I was being held left on St. Michael’s arm. I put my head down upon his mailed shoulder for I was very tired. But this respite lasted only a moment. Rest is not for now but for eternity. I awoke to the renewed struggle against evil. I hope this does not tire you, dear Father. You see, I am not good at this writing business and so usually make a mess of it. God bless you for all your kindness and patience. I am trying to teach the little children to have a great devotion to the Holy Angels, especially their Guardian Angel and St. Michael. We say the prayer to St. Michael every day in the classroom, the big one the Priest says after Mass. The children can say it “by heart” now. Do you think St. Michael is pleased? May our dear Lady, whom we both love so much, watch over you always. Respectfully and with gratitude, Your very small daughter in Christ, Sister M. Ephrem

The evening of the 24th of Feb. 1958 (SME journeys through hell with St. Michael) As I was composing myself to sleep I underwent a strange and horrifying experience. As I was not yet asleep I do not think it could have been a dream. It came suddenly without sign or warning and as such, left an indelible impression on my mind and heart. I found myself on a lonely road, one of course, I had never seen or been on at any time. Before me was a large structure, something similar to a gigantic Cathedral or castle. It was huge, somber and forbidding. I was obliged to walk toward it though something inside me held back in a kind of dread. Then at my side on the right I felt the strong presence of St. Michael. He did not speak, but just having him there made me feel safe. We continued our journey and at last came to what appeared to be the front entrance to the strange building. As we drew nearer, the two great doors which had the qualities, so it seemed, of some sort of glass work, opened of themselves. I saw no one. The interior revealed an odd, indescribable darkness, pervaded by a weird sort of light which was not really light. We entered, and without looking back I knew that the doors had closed inexorably behind us and that we would never leave the same way we had entered. When I said that the light was not really light I meant it was more like the distant glow of a raging fire. What appeared to be openings in this vast and horrible place looked more like huge windows, painted a vivid red, solid and impenetrable, like an unbreakable wall of fire. Yet they did not have the usual accompaniments of fire, like flames or smoke, just, as I said before a solid red like stained glass windows of some sort. I felt the frightening certainty of where we were. Just the same I could not help asking my companion, “What is this place?” Gravely, solemnly he replied, “This is hell.” He said this in a way that I will never forget. I wondered that, except for the red openings there was no appearance of fire anywhere. Answering these unvoiced thoughts, my companion explained, “The fire is in the souls of the lost, not

an outward but an inward fire that never dies.” I did not see these lost souls but I knew that they were all about us and I thought of the horror that was theirs, and that it would never end. The silence was appalling. It was the silence of death without hope. As we continued our journey there was not a breath of a sound. The intense and penetrating silence or rather stillness was terrifying beyond description. Yet that very silence screamed with the undying voice of despair – nothing, nothing, nothing – lost, lost, lost – forever, forever, forever. I was filled with the most terrible fear that I would never get out of this dreadful place. And oh how I missed the light! When explaining then to my companion, “But there is no light,” he made answer, “How can there be light where God is not.” I kept begging St. Michael not to leave me. Never have I experienced such fear, such horror. As we walked on we came to what appeared to be a large body of water. It looked like an enormous circular pool. It all but overflowed with some sort of dark substance. What that was I do not know but it was not water. I did not touch it to make certain but knew in my mind that it was not water. I was too terror-struck to investigate further. Lying about this pool, in a rather scattered manner were, what appeared to be dead objects of some sort. We did not go close enough for me to see just what they were. I cannot imagine anything worse or more horrible than what I felt and saw in this place. I was told, at least so I understood it, that this was the least part of eternal punishment. What then must the rest be like? Besides, not by far, was all this least part shown me. I understood that no one could experience the full sight of hell and live. When we left this we came upon another aspect of eternal punishment which made a deep impression on me. On what appeared to be a rather wide ledge on the side of a mountain I saw many, many people going back and forth, back and forth, searching, searching. they were surrounded, engulfed in flames of fire. They seemed themselves to be a part of the fire as though it came from within them. My companion then explained to me that these were they who had no time for God while they lived upon earth. Now they were condemned to spend an eternity seeking Him Whom they would never find. An endless search without hope, without ever the joy of finding and possessing. What a torture this must be! Oh the Justice of God! On the morning of **Feb. 26, 1958**, during Holy Mass, the thought of the lost ones, especially the chosen, grieved me. Then Our Lord appearing to me at that moment spoke these words to me: *“Beloved spouse, I condemn no one. If a soul is condemned it has condemned itself.”* And I knew in my heart that this was so, though my eyes filled with tears.

April 12, 1958 (St. Joseph speaks of a secret of the interior life, which souls must strive for, life which the Holy Family lived) Dear Father, Here are some things I feel you should know, for not only will they be of great benefit for you but also to those whom your great love for God, will reach. Like his holy Spouse, St. Joseph also, never ceases to remind me of my first duty, the first duty of every soul especially the chosen, of living with God in the interior castle of our hearts. So, on March 30th, before voicing his own requests, St. Joseph spoke of this first duty which comes before all others. *“It is time. Kneel my beloved daughter, for God is about to reveal to you a secret of the interior life. Few there are who learn it and fewer they who live it in its fullness. This secret, dear child, is living with Him Who is within you and has made of your soul His kingdom. There are many who know this Doctrine, but few to whom God reveals its secret operations. Few souls there are who empty themselves of all things that they may possess this Secret of secrets, this ultimate glory of all living, this union with the Divine, ending in External Vision. This secret cannot be written, lovely child, its deepest meaning will be made known to you in the interior depths of your child-like soul, in your humble heart, where Love has found Its resting place, Its palace beautiful. They who would possess for themselves the mysterious workings of this Divine Secret must strive to cultivate in silence and humility this love for the Eternal Being dwelling within them. We lived this life, beloved child, so to attain it souls must imitate as far as possible, the fullness of our union with the Indwelling God.”*

Feb. 25, 1958 (from 4.12.58 letter) (SME is taken by the little peasant girl, St. Bernadette, to the Lourdes grotto in France. She saw “The Lady” but is held back from following the path of light into which Our Lady went. On Holy Thursday, Our Lord comes with the Host and Chalice and Speaks of His Life as Host of every Communion and His awaiting souls to receive Him) I had another of those “experiences” of which you have already heard,

Father, many times. Though I had not at that time been thinking of her, she suddenly appeared at my side. This person was none other than St. Bernadette. She did not come as a Sister but as the little peasant girl who saw “the Lady”. I was transported, somehow, with her, to the Lourdes Grotto in France. We stood a short distance away from it looking up into the niche which was filled with light. In the midst of this brilliant light I saw “the Lady”, so beautiful so glowing, as it were, in light that I could scarcely see the outline of her figure. It was brighter than any light I have ever seen. It was a light all -heavenly and full of glory. I was transfixed. Then suddenly the figure of Our Lady seemed to dissolve in the light but the brilliant light itself remained. Then I saw a path, at times it seemed to take the form of steps, leading upwards from the niche where “the Lady” had been standing. Ever so often as I gazed at this luminous pathway I caught a glimpse of angels. I was anxious to follow the path of light and as I eagerly endeavored to do so, Bernadette held me back. Then I exclaimed, “*But I want to go there.*” The saint answered, “*No, my sister, it is not yet time for you, but it will be soon.*” ___ Recalling it later, Father, it came to my mind how deep was the significance of this experience. Is not Our Lady the path that leads to Jesus? Is she not the Gate of Heaven? Oh how our Mother loves us. How much she desires our salvation and sanctification, and how ardently she works for it. ___ On Holy Thursday Jesus came, holding in His hands the Host and the Chalice, saying: “*I am the Host of every Communion. I am Life to all who partake of Me. They who do not eat Me will die, for no one can live who does not partake of Me, for I am Eternal Life. Come, beloved souls, poor sinners so dear to the Heart of your Host. Come, receive Me that you may live and enjoy everlasting happiness in the kingdom of My Father Who is your Father also. This I have obtained for you through My Body and Blood sacrificed for you on Calvary and become your Food and Drink in the Holy Mass offered constantly for you. Do not disappoint My hopes for I have waited long, oh so long for you. Bring joy to My Heart by letting Me come into yours. It is I alone Who can bring you happiness for only in Me is joy found in its fullness. Come, that you may have life.*” ___ Pray for me Father, God bless you, SME

April 15, 1958 (SME is visited by the Holy Family)...What I had wanted to mention to you was that, as he had promised (St. Joseph), Jesus and Mary also came on the 30th. Jesus had the appearance of a boy of about fifteen or sixteen years old. He spoke to me first. It was about the sanctification of the family and some other matters. He said I would not have to write what He was telling me then, He would require this of me at a later date. God bless you Father and thank you so much for all your patience and kindness. Pray for me, SME

(same letter) **(SME encourages the confessor, upholds him always with her prayers and asks his prayers)** You have ever been an example of deep spirituality to all about you. Now, more than ever, souls will look up to you for the example and help they seek. God’s and Our Lady’s help sustaining you, you will not fail Them. I will uphold you always with my prayers and beg you to do the same for Your very, small, daughter in Christ, S.M.E.

(same letter) **(SME congratulates the new Bishop, Rev. Leibold, and encourages him to be a Bishop of intense holiness for souls)** Rev. & dear Father, Congratulations to the new Bishop-elect. I’m offering a special 5 days of prayer for you. Although I feel sorry for you, being laden with so heavy a burden, it is, as you know, the best thing that could have happened. Our Lady knows very well what she is doing, and just exactly how she wants things done. It does not matter whether you become a successful Bishop or a popular one. It is only necessary that you become an intensely, holy one. It will be your holiness that will reach souls and draw them to Christ. It is through the sanctity of your life that myriads of souls will reach God. Let this ever be your encouragement and consolation, that Our Lady will always be near.

(By this date, 4/15/58 – Sister Mary Ephrem has seen Our Lady in 12 different Ways, primarily as Our Lady of America. Each Apparition is dated per Sister’s letters to Rev. Leibold. Afterwards, Heavenly communications continue.)

*Our Lady of Lourdes
(September 25, 1956)*

Our Lady of America, the Immaculate Virgin
(September 26 and 27, 1956 in Rome City, Indiana plus additional dates and locations)
Our Lady of the Precious Blood
(letter 12/6/56)

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
(letter 3/57)

Our Lady, Mother of Sorrows
(letter 4/25/57)

Our Lady of Grace
(letter 4/25/57)

Our Lady of Mount Carmel
(letter 4/25/57)

Our Lady, Mother of Mercy
(2nd Sunday after Easter 5/5/57)

Our Lady, The Queen of Heaven
(Feast of the Queenship of Mary 5/31/57)

Our Lady of the Divine Indwelling
(11/22 and 23/57)

The Immaculate Conception
(letter 4/12/58)

Our Lady of The Holy Family
(letter 4/15/58)

June 17, 1958 Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio (SME's spiritual director is now Bishop. A saintly retreat master asks sister to write her life story and experiences and to collect letters from Bishop Leibold for this work. She obeys his directives and that of Bishop Leibold in maintaining strict secrecy with them and only Sister Florecita, who cares for SME in the cloister) His Excellency, The Most Rev. Paul F. Leibold 29 E. 8th St. Cincinnati 2, Ohio Most Rev. & dear Bishop, Your getting so high up these days, it almost takes half the page of writing paper just to get the titles and everything else in even before one can start saying anything. I'm sure you are more than happy that all is over with now, that is, the fuss. I do hope you are given a vacation at this point so you can recuperate from all the honors, dignities, speeches, etc. I'm sure you are very much in need of a bit of rest. You've been doing more than your share of work, that is certain. I remembered you in a very special way June 17th. It could have been the 18th, but of course the important dates are usually overlooked. How nice it would have been to be there for your consecration. But I can see, as you will also, the Hand of God in the sudden chain of events as they happened. At the time it appeared very strange, incomprehensible and rather upsetting. I was not, to begin with, to have made the retreat at New Riegel which began June 1st. That was definite until suddenly the other orders came, as you well know. God moves in mysterious ways and only gradually does He reveal the pattern of His Will in the events of each moment of our lives. What a mystery of love this is. The retreat was a unique one. All the Sisters remarked that. The priest who gave it spoke quite a bit on the different aspects and steps of the spiritual life. A very saintly man, you could see

the love of God shining through everything he said. He gave us many points about the mystical life in so simple and clear a manner that all the Sisters were struck by it. An older priest, somewhere in the early sixties, he had long been and still is spiritual director of mystics. One could feel holiness overflowing from him. You know of course, Bishop how reluctant I am to speak to anyone about my spiritual life. It is very difficult for me and I prefer not to do it. However, Sister Florecita advised me to speak to the Retreat-Master as he seemed to have a deep and learned understanding of the mystical life. In obedience to what I felt was God's Will, I did so. I just told him the high-lights as it would have taken too much time to tell all. Anyway that was not necessary. He asked me quite a few questions and step by step reviewed my ascent through the mystical life. He was convinced of the truth of it and asked if I would mind if he would request my Superior to command me in holy obedience to start writing the story of my life. You can imagine how I felt. This was something I had dreaded for a long time. I felt someday it would be required of me and I shuddered inwardly. You know what a penance it is for me to write, especially what concerns me spiritually, so here I am in for a special brand of mortification and penance. But since such is the Will of God it is therefore wholly acceptable to me as such and so I will do my best with His help. Pray much for me because you know how difficult this will be for this very small sister, the least in God's house. Of course you know Bishop, that since I've had you to guide me all these years it wouldn't have been necessary for me to find out the truth from someone else as I believed implicitly in your judgment. But since obedience so directed it, it was comforting to have another holy priest confirm your judgment in my regard. I told him about you being my spiritual director and he said that, in the near future he would try to have a talk with you. He is very much interested. There were some things he told me that I must do. It was necessary, he said, that everything be written into this manuscript as they happened and as far as possible, the dates as well. I told him that I never kept anything for myself of these but destroyed them after I had made a copy for you. He then requested that I ask you to give me all the papers and letters concerning these things so that they could be re-written in the manuscript. That would mean what was written in the little note-book also. If you wish me to send all these back to you again after I finish with them I will be most happy to do so Bishop. Do you agree on all this Bishop and are you also of the opinion that this manuscript be written? I would very much like to have your opinion about this as you know I have always had the greatest confidence in your judgment. I will begin to write, as obedience has directed me, but I would like to know what your thoughts are concerning it. When the manuscript is finished a copy will be sent to you. This is of course to be kept strictly secret. Only yourself, the Retreat-Master and Sister Florecita know about it. Not even Rev. Mother must know of it till all is completed. Then she too will receive a copy. You remember this was your advise to me some time ago. The Retreat Master gave me the same orders. Any personal messages from Our Lady etc. will not be written in the manuscripts, just mentioned as being given. Those are for the individuals alone, unless they wish themselves that they be made known. We do hope you will be able to come for the 16th. Sister Florecita said to tell you that if ever you have the time to do so your advice are always welcome to stay here as we have a special room here for that purpose. May you take advantage of this often, we hope. It would be nice if you could stay a few days after the 16th or get here before that day as I don't imagine I'll get much chance to talk to you on the 16th and there are things I must speak to you about Bishop. Sister Florecita has been very kind and very good to me. Sister won't let me do any heavy work and I get plenty of rest and fresh air. Sister is also giving me, plus the usual time, also extra, for my writing. You can imagine how grateful I am for this. God will surely reward her for it. God bless you Bishop and very best wishes and prayers. Pray for me. Hoping to see you soon. With grateful affection and respect, Your very small daughter in Christ, Sister M. Ephrem P.S. All at the chancery are welcome to come for the 16th, as they are all our good friends.

July 23, 1958 Sisters Of The Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio (SME thanks Bishop Leibold for a recent visit and invites him to return and offer Mass in the Cloister chapel. Someone who assists the Bishop lets the Mother General know that many letters are coming to the Bishop from the cloister. Sister continues to remind and encourage the Bishop with the Mission of Our Lady and of Her Heavenly Requests) His Excellency, The Most Rev. Paul F. Leibold 29 E. 8th St. Cincinnati 2, Ohio Most Rev. & dear Bishop: How wonderful it was to have you with us on the 16th. I didn't get to speak with you very much but that, of course,

was not the day for it. But it did me so much good just to have you here. The other Sisters too greatly appreciated having you with us on that happy day. Remember Bishop, you are welcome to come here at any time. Perhaps you will give us the honor of saying Mass for us in our Chapel sometime. We most certainly hope so. You know that you will always be remembered in our prayers. Someone, we can only surmise it's from your place, has been telling Rev. Mother often that there is an awful lot of writing being sent out from here to you. Rev. Mother has mentioned it several times as though it rather bothers or irritates her. I don't know how it could be done Bishop, but do you think it would be possible for you to get hold of your mail before someone else goes through it all. I'm trying to avoid trouble as much as I can, as I feel it's the right thing to do. But at the same time I don't want to put you on a spot either. The fact is I wouldn't mind having the trouble thrown on me, but I don't want it to even approach you, if I can in any way divert it. Anyway Bishop do as you judge best in this case. I just didn't know what to do about it. I am confident that you won't forget about the writings. You have so much on your mind, that I wouldn't be at all surprised if you did. That's why I thought a little reminder wouldn't hurt. What a champion Our Lady has in you Bishop. How well she has chosen. Through your devoted and untiring efforts I know the fulfillment of her desires will be realized. The time is short, as she so often reminds me, but the punishment of God is long. We can avert the Divine Justice by making use of Mary's powerful intercession and by doing those necessary things she asks us to do. In the end, it is up to us. Bishop will you please send us a large photo of yourself as a Bishop. We would very much like to have one for our Cloister. We would be very grateful if you would do us this favor. We have one already of Bishop Rerhring.¹ When you come again sometime we will show you some things you didn't get to see on the 16th . I think you can guess what they are, maybe. God bless you Bishop. Pray for us, but mostly for me, who need it so much more. Your very, small, daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Sept. 12, 1958 – (28 years ago on this day Mildred Marie Neuzil entered the convent, Sisters of the Precious Blood, as an aspirant, and after 4 days becomes a postulant. SME mentions her profound realization of her own nothingness which has become the permanent state of her soul, God is ever present, as she clings tightly and tenaciously to the Hand of His Mercy and All-Wise Providence. Our Lord and Our Lady urge sister to finish the obedience to write her life story, as They have more for her to write down. Divine Presence sustains her daily living. “This utter emptying of ourselves, this total surrender to the Divine Will is the door which opens into the House of Peace, the life of union.” A consuming Fire burns withing sister to draw souls to God. Our Lady of America again Appears, on the anniversary of sister's entrance. Our Lord also came and taught to reflect on the Passion for strength. Sister is proud of St. Paul and her spiritual director Bishop Leibold) Most Rev and dear Bishop Leibold, Let us put on the spirit of Mary that we may grow into the likeness of Christ. Forgive me for my long delay I writing. You can see by the date when I began it. Just got started with the headlines and that's all. The time goes faster for me here than in any other place I've been. Thank you very much for your sound advice concerning letters to you. We should not have been so anxious about it but you can understand our earnest desire and effort to safeguard the Cloister as well as possible. Then, you know me. If I can avoid causing any trouble or anxiety to anyone, nothing would prevent me from doing so. But in this case it seems unavoidable, so one muse accept as a consequence, suspicious accusations, etc., with equanimity, for the love of God and Our Lady. It no longer disturbs me, thanks to your good sense. How much I appreciate your remembrance of my entrance day, Sept. 12th and especially the prayers. I came on a Friday, was an aspirant four days and became a postulant, Sept. 17th. It doesn't seem like 28 years. Time goes past so quickly. When I think of how good God has been to me all these these years, my lack of generosity shames me. Every night before retiring I remind Him of what an unprofitable servant I am, not even doing that which I should do, so if he wishes me to be of more use to His glory, He will have to see to it as I have nothing of myself. In deep compunction of heart and in the profound realization of my own nothingness which has become the permanent state of my soul, God is ever present to me and I cling tightly and tenaciously to the Hand of His Mercy and All-Wise Providence. The prayer, “Oh God be merciful to me a sinner,” is one of my favorites. What a lesson of truth it contains. I never realized the depth³ of its meaning as much as now at this time. I see myself in this little prayer for what I really am. What a revelation

of my weakness and God's mercy. We appreciate more than we can say the articles on the contemplative life which you so graciously sent us. Sister is going to get a scrap book where we can keep them all together and read them from time to time. It is so kind of you to take the trouble of doing this for us. May God reward you, Bishop. Our Lord and His Mother have not asked me to write anything ever since obedience directed me to write the "life". But Our Lord has asked me to try to finish it (the life) as soon as possible because both He and His Mother have many more things to tell me and that they want written down. So you see Bishop, there is no letting down on the job. Speaking of jobs, I know you'll be interested to be informed that besides helping with the ordinary – cleaning, laundry work, etc., I'm trying my skill at hand-braided rugs. It is not hard to do and is very interesting. Besides this I've also taken up knitting, crochet and the making of hair-pin lace. In between there is even a bit of time for some art work, but right now we have to concentrate on self-support. In time, when we have sufficient members, I'll be able to do more on this line. Enabled now to do work more according to my ability and strength, Bishop, I'm beginning to feel more relaxed and at ease. This has helped in a very great degree the improvement in health which I now enjoy. You know Bishop, that all my religious life, except the few years of teaching, my artistic tendency was given somewhat of an outlet then, I was always placed in positions where⁷ the talents at which I was most adept could seldom, if ever, be put to use. This continuous going against myself in the performance of tasks in which I did not feel capable or especially interested because of contrary leanings, though it built in me a strength that nothing has been able to weaken, had taken its toll on me, physically. I know that grace upheld me, otherwise a complete breakdown would have certainly been the result. When looking back over the last years especially, I can see clearly how the strength of the Divine Presence supported me. Without this help, my high-strung nature would have suffered severe collapse. That it did not is due to the power of that Inner Presence, so loved, so cherished, to Whose glory my whole life is dedicated. The above statement, Bishop, is in no way a complaint directed towards Authority. God willed and permitted me to come by the way I did, because it was very necessary that I be detached and despoiled of everything, talents included. I never really felt any resentment, and now only a deep profound peace.

For a long time Sister Florecita has had in mind my taking over the instruction of the new ones coming in. Sister mentioned this to Rev. Mother a few years ago and intends doing so again at the first opportunity. It is now only on a trial basis until sanctioned by Higher Authority. I have started practicing on the two of them here, that is Sister Florecita and Sister M. Leo. It began last Sunday, September 14th. Naturally our goal is Divine Union in which perfect peace reigns. The first instruction was an explanation of the true meaning of complete poverty of spirit, utter detachment, in other words. The contents of subsequent topics will be the means through which this poverty of spirit can be attained. All will center around this complete detachment, especially of the interior. **This utter emptying of ourselves, this total surrender to the Divine Will is the door which opens into the House of Peace, the life of union.** Since I know by this time how incapable this little sister is in every way, the Holy Spirit will have to take over, if the assignment is officially given me. Sister is keeping the instructions as I write them. For myself a general outline is all that is needed. I never look at the paper anyway except to see if any special point was overlooked. You know, Bishop, **what a longing there is in me to draw souls to God. It is a consuming fire that incessantly burns within me.** So it seems that Our Lord in this way is giving me a certain outlet for this fire. Sister has just given me a loose leaf book in which to write the instructions so that they can be kept together. Please pray for me, so that if the work is officially assigned to me, the Holy Spirit may grant me the special lights needed to do it as well as possible. **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.** 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. One morning when it was rather cold and I was shivering in the process of preparing myself for prayer, Our Lord came to me and noticing how my thought had been dwelling on how much I was suffering from the cold, He said to me, *"Remember My Wounds, My daughter, and nothing will seem hard to thee."* (Sept. 13th 1958). This struck me very forcibly, Bishop, and is a great help to me. I saw the list of Confirmations you are due for, Bishop, so thought

the above words of Our Lord might be a comfort and a help to you also. We are so inclined to magnify our own pains and grievances. When we contemplate the sufferings of Our Lord, however, how small and insignificant ours appear. Sister asked me to design the official Cloister Christmas card this year. I'm not going to tell you what it is like because I want it to be a surprise for you. You'll like it, Bishop, I just know you will. The Mother General of some Franciscan Order in Dayton has requested Our Rev. Mother for permission to go through our Cloister. It seems other Communities are becoming interested. Bishop, Sister Florecita requested that I obtain your advice as to how to proceed in inviting His Grace to visit the Cloister. Sister received permission for this from Rev. Mother last Spring but was not certain just how to go about it. We would greatly appreciate your advice on this point. You remember those pictures you brought along on the 16th, of your consecration? Well, I hardly had time to look at them and the other two Sisters didn't get to see them at all. Bishop, please when you get the chance to come here again will you bring them along with you, if possible? We would very much like to see them. Those I had the chance to glance at were very good, except there wasn't enough of you on them. It seemed you deliberately tried to hide yourself. Not that I blame you. In your place I would have done the same thing. The holy little holy cards you sent in remembrance of your consecration were very much appreciated. I like that sword in St. Paul's hand. I feel like standing staunchly beside him and proclaiming at the top of my voice, "*Hurrah for St. Paul and Bishop Leibold.*" But then I'm proud of both of you am I not, the Apostle Paul who was not afraid to suffer all things for Christ and my humble and faithful Spiritual Father who is just as eager and anxious to do the same? I'm afraid all those confirmations are going to wear you out. Please take care of yourself, Bishop or I'll start worrying about you. God bless you always. Pray for me. P.S. Greetings from the other Sisters, too. Your little daughter in Jesus – Sister M. Ephrem

Jan. 20, 1959 – (additional mention of no new sisters to the Cloister. Fewer Heavenly visits; she bears it patiently for as long as God pleases, while striving to become more mortified, silent and recollected) We expected a new member in January but it doesn't look like it's going to materialize. Now it's, maybe in Feb. or perhaps in the Spring or summer, so we're not raising any false hopes among ourselves. The shortage of Sisters is acute so we are not surprised at the frequent delays. We have simply resolved to do the best we can and leave the rest in the hands of God. His Will is best after all. My consolations are few and far between, but I do not miss them. What I mean is, with the help of grace, I have been learning to do without them. So I've come to the point where I simply do not rely upon them at all. Even Our Lady's visits, though at the time of their happening they renew my joy and lagging courage, seem to leave me the same dry, weak and insipid creature I was before, surrounded by darkness which becomes too thick at times to be even penetrated, in the smallest way, by anything. Well I resolutely strive not to let it bother me because if God wills this for me now that means it is the best for me. Praised and glorified be His Holy Will which directs all so wisely. The only thing I complain to Him about is my lack of love and I shall continue my complaints to Him on this point, like the woman in the Gospel. He will do something about it eventually if it's only to make me cease my clammering. But then you know Bishop, Our Lord loves to be pursued and persuaded and the more souls do this the more certain will they be that their prayers will be heard. I make it a point, each morning after Holy Communion, to place myself before Our Lord as a bundle of dry wood, really dry Bishop. Then I beg Him to let just one spark of the Divine Fire that burns in His Heart fall upon it consuming it entirely. Each morning I present Him with the same petition. He will hear me, that I know, because He wants this more even than I. There is one consolation concerning the wood, namely more the drier it is the rapidly it will burn and there won't be the danger of any of it being left unburnt. Yet Bishop it seems, as I must humbly confess, that I have become an enigma to myself and perhaps the same to others also, but it is something I can do nothing about except to bear it patiently for as long as God pleases. In the meantime I am striving to become more mortified, silent and recollected. I'm a failure more often than not but I keep on trying with all the love of my heart because I am doing it for Him and only for Him. By the looks of things you are really galovanting around Bishop. I hope you're not getting too important otherwise you may not have time even to read my poor letters anymore. What you need is another Auxiliary to help you out while you're doing the same for His Grace. We had snow for Christmas but not too much. You should have been here for Thanksgiving. The snow-fall was quite

heavy so in order to make the best use of it while it lasted, I put on my seven – league – boots and clomped my way through it. What fun! I had the time of my life as you can imagine. I would have liked to make a snow man but it was time to go inside for other duties. We had a very happy Christmas and a merry one too. Something seems never to be missing here and that is, joy and contentment. So we have much to be thankful for. By the way, we were surprised and delighted with your little thank you note concerning the pillow. What an honor, to have the Infant carried on it. How really nice of you to give us such a unique joy. Thank you a thousand times from each of us. So glad that you liked the pillow too. I don't know what happens to the time around here. It seems to me that all I have to do is turn my head and half the day is gone. I've never been anywhere so sparse on time as this place. We make fast use of it but we still can't get everything in. You see Bishop, we are really leading a "fast life": I hope you enjoyed your stay in Wash. D.C. I'm sure the Shrine is everything they say it is. I was stationed in Wash. my first five years as a professed Religious. We often went to the Shrine for Mass and Benediction. You must have done a fine job of renovating at the Chancery. We've been hearing some very nice things about it. God bless you Bishop. Again, many thanks for all your kindness. Sister Florecita sends special thanks and greetings. Pray always for Your very, small, daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

3.1.59 – Poems by Sister Mary Ephrem

3-59

CALVARY'S MASS

Blood of Jesus, Stream of glory,
Pouring from the Holy Mount;
Behold, Thy Passion tells the story
Of that sacred, gushing Font.

Blood, at words of consecration,
Flowing forth for man's salvation
O'er the earth, in gleaming splendor,
Praise to God's great mercy render.

Lo! The angels from high heaven
Come to gather the Life-leaven;
Calvary's food and drink divine,
Consecrated Bread and Wine.

O world, pass by and see the glory
Of the Saviour's Passion story;
Crimson tide with love-light glowing,
On us grace and peace bestowing.

Blood of Jesus, Stream of glory,
Pouring from the Holy Mount,
Hear us now, one Voice imploring,
Cleanse us in Thy Sacred Font.

--Sister Mary Ephrem, C.P.P.S.

NEUZIL

ROSE OF THE CROSS

Rose of the Cross,
I see Thy petals drooping
While overhead the clouds
to Thee are stooping, 1962
The piercing thorn,
the tender leaves entwining

About the Holy Tree, in sorrow pining
For me, for me.

Rose of the Cross;
I kneel to catch Thy fragrance;
O may Thy wondrous love
my soul entrance!

What liken to Thy beauty,
Rose once white,
Now red with Blood,
drooping in the night:
For me, for me.

--Sister Mary Ephrem

NEUZIL

NEUZIL, MILDRED

3 1962

CAUSE OF OUR JOY

O Pearl most renowned,
Most gloriously crowned,
Lily 'mid cruel thorns of Eve.

O Star without blight,
All heaven's delight,
No lovelier could we conceive.

O embattled array,
No enemy can stay,
The might of your transcendent
power.

O Lady enshrined,
In Deity, divined,
Impregnable Ivory Tower.

Moon-tipped, your slippers,
Above starry dippers.
Your brightness belittles the sun.

Bloom of the morning,
Who without mourning,
Brought forth the thrice Holy One.

--Sister Mary Ephrem

May 15, 1959 (SME is granted permission to make Cloister promises for life, which is wonderful to her. The Reverend Mother is told by another sister of the revelations to Sister Mary Ephrem, though sister herself remains silent. The Foundress of the Order, Mother Brunner, Appeared to SME the previous year, and sister promises to elaborate in another letter to the Bishop and to the Reverend Mother. The Holy Spirit is the Authority and prepared Sister Florecita to assist this great work) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, May the Holy Spirit fill your soul to overflowing with Divine Love. I have some very joyful news to tell you. First, permission has been granted me to make the Cloister promises for life. Isn't that wonderful? Second, Rev. Mother was favorably impressed concerning the message. Sister Florecita spoke to her of it and promised to send her a copy of the whole thing as soon as this can be done. I myself said nothing to Rev. Mother about the message or anything else connected with it. You know how reluctant I always am to speak of

it. Only Obedience enables me to do so. Sister just mentioned to me that Rev. Mother was very deeply impressed with what she was told. Mother herself did not ask me anything about it, and I of course didn't so much as give the slightest hint of anything. God's good time is the best time, so that is always what I wait for... At present Our Lady feels closer to me than ever. How much I need her help. I never told you Bishop that **Mother Brunner came to me on June 26, 1958**. What she told me was both assuring and enlightening. Since I do want you to get this letter by the 18th I won't be able to tell you about Mother Brunner's visit till the next time I write. It would take too long to do so now. I had wanted to tell you of it immediately but every time I wrote there were so many other things to write about it would always slip my mind. Rev. Mother was most deeply interested in Mother Brunner's visit and made Sister Florecita promise to send her a copy of the account.

Ps... By the way, I thought you might be interested to know that the evening before we called you Sister mentioned to me how all of a sudden the thought came to her that Rev. Mother should be told about the message before she left us. This would prepare her somewhat for the contents of the manuscript we intended sending to her later on. I feel now more than ever that the Holy Spirit inspired the thought. After all He is with Authority in a very special way. I feel that Sister Florecita has been prepared by God in a particular manner to assist in the accomplishment of this great work in her own faithful and hidden way. May God reward her as He most surely will.

June 3, 1959 (SME sends copies of the written "message" to Bishop Leibold, two other Bishops, two Priests and to Reverend Mother. Leaving it in the Bishop's hands, she prays for him in the care of this matter which is a very grave and serious one. SME asks Bishop Leibold, at the wish of Sister Florecita, who keeps the writings of SME, concerned for the safe-keeping of them, to see that all are entrusted to Bishop Leibold) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, May the Blessed Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, draw us ever closer to the Holy Trinity in adoration, reparation and love. With this letter I am enclosing some copies of the "message." I have also sent a copy to Bishop Isсенman and one to Bishop Marling. Of course Rev. Mother was sent one too. I leave it to your wisdom and prudence to contact the two Bishops and anyone else whom you feel, in your good judgment, should be notified or approached concerning the "message." This of course is to be done at a time you deem most feasible or opportune. I know it could not be put into safer hands than yours. I shall pray continually that the Holy Spirit may enlighten and guide you in this matter which is a very grave and serious one. You don't know what a relief it is to have at last gotten the "message" out of my hands and into the keeping of those to whom Our Lady wished it entrusted and carried out, namely, the Bishops, especially yourself to whom Our Lady first directed me. We have only a small number of the blue-covered mimeographs, so decided to send you some of each, that is the blue and the white. Do with them as you wish. If you think they should be destroyed please feel free to do so. I have also sent a copy to Father Hauser and will send one sometime to Father Thilges too.

Bishop, a few days ago Sister Florecita told me that she would be very happy if you would express the wish, which Sister will, of course, interpret as a command, that in case something happens to her by way of illness, demotion or death, that all my writings, which are in her keeping, be returned to you untouched by anyone. She is conscious of the attitude that certain individuals may be very likely to take towards anything bordering on the extraordinary. I think this is a very sound and wise course to take. One never knows what may happen, and it is always better to act with prudence in such cases, Bishop, as you so well understand

June 22, 1959 (Bishop Leibold wrote to SME 6.16.59, "*In a spirit of charity and sincere love of God and His Blessed Mother I am going to be cruel perhaps in the comments – only to be helpful – for the points I will make will have to be faced and answered if Mary has any plans for the success of this message.*" He further stated that the message was given to other Priests to whom Sister "*had gone for direction and in general they never found in them anything contrary to faith or morals and nor anything to indicate mental debility; on the contrary some points (especially the great emphasis on the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity) showed a theological*

*understanding beyond what this Sister had been able to obtain from her regular courses in Religion.” SME here elaborates, including the role of the United States that is to lead the world in this. Our Lord is the sole Mediator with the Father. It is only through Him and with Him and by Him that Mary holds back the Hand of God and appeases His wrath against us. SME blames herself for not making known at the time of Our Lady’s request for Her statue as Our Lady of America in the National Shrine. SME learns from Our Lady obedience – “*The Voice of Holy Church should be obeyed rather than a voice even of Heaven for such is the Will of God.*” Our Lady instructed SME that everything was to be done only through Bishop Leibold) Answers to criticisms concerning the “message” I) Lack of a plan or unity. Ans. – Already in the early 1940’s I was interiorly enlightened concerning the subject around which the mission entrusted to me would evolve. This was, the sanctification of the family through imitation of the Holy Family. I knew this definitely, but did not know how this was to be carried out. It was only later and gradually that it was revealed to me. **I will try, in m 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. St. Michael being the angel of peace and God’s warrior, his different appearances should not be surprising. The palm is the symbol of victory over one’s fallen nature, the sword and the torch, symbols of that Divine Charity by which evil is overcome and the Kingdom of Christ established in the hearts of men. St. Gabriel has often been called, the angel of purity, so it is only fitting that he have a special part in this work of renewal. Then you will note, Our Lord spoke first concerning the family, then Our Lady, and lastly St. Joseph, who in keeping with his role as head of the Holy Family, asks that honor be especially paid to his fatherhood.*

II) America and the United States ans. – I have known for many years that the United States and America are two different things, but the United States does belong to America. Our Lady, it is true, asks all of America to be the first to take up the cause of renewal, but it is **the United States that is to lead the world in this.** So Our Lady has stated and made known to me. Therefore it is for the United States to humbly accept Mary’s choice and to do all that it can to fulfill its mission among the peoples of the earth.

III) Our Lady of Guadalupe. Ans. – Our Lady of Guadalupe never called herself Our Lady of America. I do not know who gave her that title, although I have heard her called and also read that she was proclaimed “Empress of the Americas”, by certain Bishops, I believe. I’m not too certain about this last. Anyway, Empress of the Americas and Our Lady of America are two different titles and therefore could be held by the same person.

IV) Worldwide message. Ans. – Our Lady did proclaim the message of renewal worldwide. If you read and re-read the message carefully you will see that for yourself. The United States has simply been asked to be the first, to take the initial steps towards this renewal.

V) Holding back the Hand of God. Ans. – Our Lord is the sole Mediator with the Father. It is only through Him and with Him and by Him that Mary holds back the Hand of God and appeases His wrath against us. Mary, as well as ourselves, goes to God only through Christ and it is in this light that we must understand her words concerning her intercession in our behalf.

VI) Prayer of Oct. 5, 1956 (**Prayer to Our Lady of America, Patroness of Our Land**) Ans. – Yes, Our Lady was with me when I wrote the prayer. I was kneeling by the little table in my room and Mary stood by my side, on the right, very close to me. Though I did not hear any words the thoughts came one after the other into my mind and I wrote without stopping until it was finished. Then Our Lady left.

VII) Regarding the statue for the shrine (**Our Lady of America requested a procession in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington DC of her statue by the Bishops of the United States and that it be kept there in a place of honor**). ans. – Our Lady could have asked for another shrine to be built which would have entailed much more trouble and inconvenience, but all she asks is that a particular statue of her be placed in the shrine already being built. Is this being unreasonable do you think? Besides in a shrine as large as that surely there would be place for another statue even if it is to be put in the niche of the honor as a part of Mary's request. Anyway, Our Lady is not to blame for the long wait. She already requested the statue in 1956. It is my fault. I blame myself for not making it known then when she requested it.

VIII) Concerning the medal. (**Our Lady of America requested a medal be struck according to Her Design. Bishop Leibold later fulfilled this**) ans. – I asked Our Lady to tell me what to do about the medals. I knew that I myself could not change anything, so I begged her for light. On the afternoon of June 21, 1959 as I was praying in my room, I suddenly felt the presence of Our Lady beside me. She did not speak nor did I hear any words, but I was given light and understanding as to what course I was to take. I was made to understand that if Authority wished to simplify the medal I was not to oppose it in any way. I was directed not to oppose Authority in anything even if this would mean that Our Lady's wishes were not carried out. Our Lady impressed upon me the necessity of child-like obedience and confidence in the Authority placed over me. **The Voice of Holy Church should be obeyed rather than a voice even of heaven for such is the will of God.**

IX) The first Wednesdays. Ans. – I'm certain that St. Joseph would never think of upsetting the good order of the Church, therefore it is an extra five decades of the rosary that he asks for on the first Wednesday of every month.

X) What Bishop? Ans. – You recall Bishop, that **Our Lady instructed me that everything was to be done only through you.** I myself was to do nothing directly. Therefore when Our Lady asked me to go to the Bishop it was to be done through you and only indirectly by myself. You will remember that in one of the petitions in the "message" Our Lady's plea was that you go to "*him who is head over you*" making known her desires. I take this to mean His Grace, the Archbishop (**Leibold**). I wouldn't know who else it could mean. I made the mistake of going to the Bishop residing at the place where I was stationed at the time. Our Lady does not want me to do things that way, directly, I mean, and because I did, it turned out to be the wrong person, at least so it appears to me. But Our Lady turned this to advantage as it drew a very zealous Bishop to her cause, one who would do anything to promote her honor. May the Most Holy Trinity be forever glorified in every soul, and may the Holy Family be with us to show us the way to true and lasting peace.

Nov. 1, 1959 (**SME is reassured by Our Lady and here reveals it only to her spiritual director Archbishop Leibold**) **On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, 1958, Our Lady** told me something which concerned only myself so I was asked not to reveal it to anyone. I was suffering from an interior trial which was weighing on me very much. It concerned the message. In the evening Our Lady came and addressed me in this manner: "*Have confidence my daughter. You have not abandoned me, think then that I will abandon you?*"

Feb. 2, 1960 (**Sister M. Octavia types the corrected manuscript with SME's complete consent. She asks her spiritual director for a title for the manuscript and for his approval to make copies for those immediately concerned**)

The introduction is word for word from the direction of Bishop Leibold) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Greetings on this happy feast of light and peace. May the Divine Light illumine your soul ever more and more with His radiant beams. Along with this letter I am sending you a copy of the manuscript which Sister M. Octavia so kindly corrected and typed out for me. All has been re-arranged in the right order and certain grammatical errors taken care of. Sister and I went over the manuscript together while she was here visiting and no correction or change was made without my consent. The messages themselves remain intact. Nothing has been changed in them. I am sending this copy to you for your perusal and approval. Sister mentioned that I had no title for the manuscript and wondered whether I meant to have one. I had not thought of this, Bishop, but if you feel that the manuscript should have a title, will you kindly suggest one that, in your opinion, would be most appropriate or suitable? I would be so grateful. Also, Bishop, will you please send this copy back to me as soon as you have finished with it? If it has your approval and you give the necessary permission, then additional copies can be made on the multigraph. There is certainly no thought of publication of any kind whatsoever. These copies will only be for those immediately concerned, mainly yourself, Bishop. I will send you a number of copies when and as soon as these are placed at my disposal. Then you may destroy the old copies. You will notice that the experience concerning Mother Brunner was placed last as it to do was thought better, so because it might confuse things otherwise. If you feel differently about it Bishop we will put it where it would belong chronologically. I've been assigned to oversee the weaving department and so I'll have to be on the look out that all goes well and smoothly. Since Our Lord is the Master-Weaver par excellence I've placed both myself and the new obedience into His hands. That He with His dear Mother and the ever watchful St. Joseph will take good care of everything I haven't the slightest doubt. So I will try my very best at the new appointment come what may. Only he is a failure who does not conform himself in all things to the Will of God. How often we measure success by what is accomplished and yet this is the worst of measures if any at all. How differently God regards such things. We are all well and happy and still hoping for that visit you promised. Before I close I just want to mention that I've been asked to give the Lenten Instructions, so pray for me. God bless you Bishop. Gratefully in Mary, Sister M. Ephrem

(see 2.2.60 manuscript...)

March 5, 1960 (SME expresses really loving God's Will) ...it seems there are quite a few changes everywhere. Well I guess we have to expect that. It belongs to Religious Life, lack of understanding too, and appreciation of talent. Each of us has a special Cross to bear and some have a great deal more than one. But **once we learn to really love God's Will nothing is or seems to be as hard to bear as it did before.** The Good Pleasure of God – it puts such a different light on everything. Please say a prayer for Sister Florecita won't you? Sister has not been at all well. She sends special greetings. In regard to the manuscripts we also have given out only a very few but we had only a small pack to begin with and so would like to have more on hand as we don't know when we'll have the next opportunity to get more printed. God bless you Bishop. Pray always for, Your vary small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem

March 19, 1960 (SME to The Most Reverend Karl J. Alter, Ordinary of the Mother House in Dayton and President of the Body of the Bishops of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in the United States. She surrenders the manuscript to his directives, with humble compliance. She presents Bishop Leibold as spiritual director in these matters. The same was submitted to The Most Reverend George J. Rehring, S.T.D. Bishop of Toledo) Sister Mary Ephrem to The Most Reverend Karl J. Alter 5870 Belmont Avenue Cincinnati 24, Ohio - Your Grace: After long and serious consideration, with the prudent advice of my spiritual director, and with the full knowledge of my Religious Superiors, I humbly submit to your judgment the manuscript that accompanies this letter. I have no intention of pressing the matter any further, and I am merely taking this step to satisfy what I feel is imperative. I humbly ask Your Grace to read the manuscript over, and if there are any directives, I will accept them gratefully, and I will strive to do whatever is required of me. I feel it is proper and fitting to send the first copy to Your Grace as the Ordinary of our Mother House in Dayton and as the President of the Body of the

Bishops of the National Catholic Welfare Conference in the United States. Should you wish more copies for others to study or should you feel that we should send them to others, for instance, to Archbishop Ritter, head of the Shrine Committee, I will comply with whatever you may wish in this matter. On the other hand, if you feel or judge that the matter be closed and no further action taken, I am most willing to comply. May the Holy Spirit guide and direct Your Grace to do His holy Will in this regard! I have known Bishop Leibold for eighteen years and he has been my spiritual director during this period. I am sure he could supply any references that Your Grace may want concerning me. As I am stationed in the New Riegel Diocese, I have been directed to send a copy of the manuscript to His Excellency, Bishop Rehring. I close with special assurances of prayer. Most respectfully yours in Christ, Sister Mary Ephrem

March 22, 1960 (Rome granted the request of the Cloister for the Divine Office in Choir, in Latin, with the help of Father Linnenberger, C.P.P.S. They sing or chant the Divine Office in preparation for their own Bishop's approval. The Cloister also awaits Rome's approval for the Cloister constitution. Other Orders of Sisters are requesting the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity) Cloistered Sisters Of The Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Convent New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Even though it is Lent, Sister Florecita gave me special permission to write to you for a very particular reason. This is it. Rome has given us the privilege of Divine Office in Choir, latin of course. That was our petition, Father Linnenberger C.P.P.S., with whom you are surely well acquainted, has been and still is working hard for our cause, that is, the above petition which proved so successful, and, yet to come, the approval of the Cloister Constitution. The latter also, so it seems, is moving forward. We can hardly believe our good fortune. We didn't expect such quick results and are therefore very happy about it. God is extremely good to us. Since you are our special good friend Bishop, we wanted you to be the first with whom to share the good news. We knew it would greatly please you. Of course the above disclosure is as yet not official so we are asking you to keep it safely, under your mitre for the time being. Though Rome has given the necessary permission, the official go ahead must come from our own Bishop here. But while awaiting word from His Excellency we have been and are now reciting the Divine Office as a preparation and we love it. Some parts we sing, or chant rather, like the Vespers and Compline. We are beginning to get the feel of it now. Here is some more good news that I know will also please you very much. We have been getting calls for the Prayer to the Indwelling Most Holy Trinity. The Cloistered Passionist Sisters, in Chicago I believe, asked for as many as we could send them. We gave them what we had promising to send more later. A Franciscan Sister in a hospital in Phil. asked us to send her a hundred. She wants them for her silver jubilee which she will celebrate this year. The Carmelite Nuns in Albuquerque, New Mexico asked us to send them fifty. How some of these ever got hold of the prayer in the first place is a mystery to me. God's ways are wonderful. Since it was you Bishop who first had this little prayer printed it is you who deserve the most credit for the continued good work the prayer is doing. My gratitude goes beyond anything I could ever say. Since this is supposed to be a Lenten letter I think it time I stop right now before I start going on and on and on, etc. and in doing so put the poor Bishop in danger of making many unnecessary nods. Sister Florecita sends special greetings to you. Please continue to remember our cloister in your good prayers. God bless you Bishop. Pray always for, your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

March 3, 1960 (SME to Archbishop Alter) (In obedience, SME previously wrote to the Archbishop of her spiritual life. She speaks of Our Lady's Pleas to the Hierarchy of the United States, Her favorite sons, placed in high offices to do the most good. Our Lady is making her final appeal to them for carrying out of this crying need of world-reform through God's Indwelling in souls. Sister elaborates on Our Lady's Concern and her own unworthiness) Your Excellency, May the Immaculate Heart of Mary provide for all your needs and be ever a loving guide and help in all your undertakings. We are deeply grateful, Your Excellency, for the freedom you have extended to us as regards writing to you whenever we feel the need to do so. I am now making use of your great kindness, hoping it will not intrude too much on your time. Your Excellency, had not obedience so directed me, I would not have ventured to speak to you concerning my spiritual life. This was not because of any mistrust or fear to reveal these things to you, but I am extremely reticent on this point and it costs me much to reveal

anything of it even when obedience requests it of me. You then can readily understand then my feelings. how I felt. But I was grateful, in the end, for having done what Authority had advised me to do. God willed it to be that way. One can never go wrong when it is a question of obedience, as you well know. How much I appreciated your patience and understanding in listening to one you had barely become acquainted with and about whom you knew next to nothing. So you see what it meant for me to be met with such understanding as yours. And now, Your Excellency, not only do I feel it necessary to write to you, but I know that I must. Something within compels me to do it, a Power so strong that I cannot resist its impelling force. It is to the Hierarchy, especially of the United States, that Our Lady is making her plea. They are her favorite Sons, placed in high offices in order that they might do the most good. She herself has spoken thus to me. Your Excellency, you spoke of the necessity of more details in regard to Our Lady's wishes. I will try to give you as much of these as is possible in one writing. You will find these above mentioned details enclosed on separate sheets of paper. This was done to make it more convenient for you. If you should desire added information it will be given. I deem it only just, since obedience requested my speaking to you, that you should know more concerning this work. Our Lady has made known to me how pleasing to her has been the devoted service with which the Hierarchy has so ardently loved and honored her, especially in this country. **So she is making her final appeal to them for carrying out of this crying need of world-reform.** God, dwelling in the soul through grace will sanctify it if the individual makes the right use of His Presence. This is Our Lady's concern. The Souls, redeemed by the Precious Blood of her Son, must become holy through living with Him Who dwells within them. In order for this to grow and become more and more fruitful of course, there is the necessity of frequent and devout attendance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the reception of the Sacraments. Without these, there cannot be any advancement in union with God or any kind of reform whatsoever. If reform does not come from within, of what value is outward reformation? It cannot and will not succeed. I repeat, this is Our Lady's main concern, namely, sanctification from within. Peace will not be given us until we have purified ourselves enough to receive it. If we fail to do this, God Himself will be obliged to do so in His Justice and mercy, but the purifying punishment that He will send will be most terrible. It is from this Our Lady wishes to save us. She keeps warning me that the time is short. The longer we hold back, the longer will peace be denied us. 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. 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. Before closing I wish to state that all I have seen has been through the eyes of the soul, never otherwise. When mentioning the flash of light at Our Lady's appearance I meant it as a light penetrating or flashed on my mind. Our Lady herself was surrounded by a soft, glow of light that seemed to come which from within and wholly enveloped her. God bless you, Your Excellency. Pray for me, please With respect and gratitude, Sister M. Ephrem

March 31, 1960 (The Sisters of the Cloister work together, though hidden, for Our Lady's Cause, promoting the printed manuscripts. SME shares with Archbishop Leibold, her spiritual director, correspondences with Bishop Alter and Bishop Rehring) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, I am so happy to know that you are pleased with the new copy of the manuscript. It was a big job getting it all in due order as you can imagine. Sister Florecita is surely a big help to me in all this. Since taking

over the loom room I am kept so busy about “many things” that I can hardly find a moments time to do even the necessary writing. Here is where Sisters goodness comes in. She does all the packing, etc. of the manuscripts, also the typing of official letters and whatever else is needed along these lines. You can readily understand what a great relief this is to me and how grateful I am to Sister for such kind and thoughtful service. In regard to the message Sister deems it advisable to remain in the background as much as possible. As she has often mentioned to me, Sister feels that she can do more for Our Lady’s cause through her prayers and sacrifices than in any other way. You don’t know how much I appreciate your continue and zealous efforts to promote Our Lady’s cause. Do not let the outcome disturb you in any way. Our Lady counts your love and effort not the results produced. So do keep on in patience, love and humility, and neither you, Our Lady or her cause will lose out. You are doing more good than you think. It is better that we don’t always see it, namely, the good that we do. Humility of heart is so pleasing to Our Lord and His Mother. We are sending fifteen copies of the manuscript in honor of the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. May Our Lady, through this means draw many souls closer to her Son. If the manuscript does only this and nothing else I will not feel that my sufferings and efforts have been in vain. Enclosed are copies of Archbishop Alters and Bishop Rehring’s acknowledgements of the manuscript and letter sent previously. I thought you would like to have copies. The weaving is becoming more and more interesting. You ought to see, all the intricate designs I can make on rugs, purses, pillows, etc. It is most fascinating. You must come and try your hand at it one of these days Bishop. What do you think? Weaving might be an interesting hobby for you some day when you reach the very valiant age of 90 or thereabouts. Well anyway, anything can happen. I wanted to mention in my last letter how much I sympathize with you in the loss of your little haven of rest at St. Patrick’s. Doesn’t the new place afford any such seclusion? I do hope so Bishop, for your sake. By the way, how does your brother like the promotion? God bless you Bishop. Do keep up your priestly prayers for me. You know I never forget you in my life of prayer and penance. I owe you more than I can ever repay. yours I remain Bishop, Most respectfully in Mary, a little, white dove. S.M.E.

April 13, 1960 (SME to Archbishop Alter. Our Lady came to Sister with Messages for His Grace) The Most Reverent Karl J. Alter 5870 Belmont Avenue Cincinnati 24, Ohio Your Grace: 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 will 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.”* Because of certain doubts and fears I hesitated to do Our Lady’s bidding immediately. Our Lady came again in the early morning hours of April 6, 1960, and after gently reproaching me for my lack of confidence told me not to delay in sending you the words she had bade me write down. Before leaving she said: *“My children must know my desires.”* Your Grace, I close with special assurances of prayer, and with the hope that it will not be long before I shall have the happiness of speaking to you personally. I am ever, most respectfully Your humble and obedient child. Sister Mary Ephrem

Holy Thursday April 14, 1960 (SME gives her spiritual director a copy of the letter sent to Archbishop Alter. She speaks of Miracles requiring faith) Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Just a few lines to wish you a most blessed and grace filled Easter. May the risen Savior grant you the fullness of His peace. I’m hoping for a visit from you soon. I’m sure a little discussion would do you good for you are no doubt working as hard as ever. Enclosed is a copy of the letter I just this week sent to

His Grace. **Miracles are the result or rather the reward of faith.** Without faith no miracles can be expected. Christ Himself demanded this before working any of His miracles. The medal with faith yes, without faith, no. If we lack faith we will tie Our Lady's hands. All this you know Bishop of course. I did not mean to say all of that but the subject happened to be uppermost in my mind, so please excuse me...

May 1961 To Bishop Leibold (*Sister asks Bishop Leibold's criticisms and approval of the plan of action. She mentions that Reverend Mother asked all the Sisters to recite the ejaculation frequently, as given by Our Lady: "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil."*) The following is the plan of action of which I wrote in my last letter to you. It is the same that I will present to Bishop Rehring, but I want your criticism and approval of its contents first. As you are acquainted with the first two points I will state them briefly. 1. Co-ordinating the medal and message with the spiritual formation now being given to the children as a means to a more spiritual formation of their personalities and characters. This is a new Community project. 2. To do all that is in my power to spread the knowledge and love of the Divine Indwelling Presence. Particularly essential is, that Christian families live this doctrine in imitation of the Holy Family, etc. This is my mission. 3. Permissions and approvals requested: a. Medal for distribution b. Printed explanation of doctrine with practical application for children and families. Homes with picture of Our Lady of America. The use of those parts of the message pertaining to the reformation of life and the sanctification of family life. c. Approval for public recitation of prayer to the Immaculate Conception, Patroness of United States, also indulgence. d. Request for indulgence on ejaculation, "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil." (Rev. Mother has recently asked all the Sisters to recite this ejaculation frequently.) 4. Is approval from Rome necessary to obtain indulgence? If so, who must ask for it? If there are any points you feel I have missed or should insert please tell me. I will be most grateful, Bishop.

May 15, 1960 (*Plan of Action with Bishop Leibold's directives*)

1. My Mission on earth To do all I can to spread devotion to the Divine Indwelling Presence That Christian families especially live this doctrine in imitation of the Holy Family at Nazareth.

2. Methods I wish to use to spread this devotion Through a printed explanation of the Doctrine with a practical application for children and families. Through the distribution of a medal regarding which I wish to speak at greater length a little later in our discussion. Through frequent recitation of the ejaculation: "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary deliver us from evil." Through frequent recitation of Prayer to Immaculate Conception. Through distribution of pictures of Our Lady of America.

3. Permissions and approvals I wish to obtain from His Excellency a. Distribution of printed explanation of Doctrine of Divine Indwelling. b. Distribution of medal to be made according to specifications listed below. c. An indulgence of 200 days on the ejaculation: "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us from evil." (Rev. Mother has already asked the Sisters in the Congregation to recite this aspiration frequently to stay the advances of Communism). d. An indulgence of 200 days on the Prayer to the Immaculate Conception. (Bishop Leibold has already used this prayer publicly in the cathedral). e. Use of parts from message pertaining to Divine Indwelling and to reformation / and sanctification of the family.

4. Excerpt from one of Bishop Leibold's letters "Canon 1385 #1 P.3 - On censorship definitely refers to censorship of images as well as books. So a medal must be approved; also, Canon 1279 warns the Local Ordinary about any fantastic images, etc., being permitted for public veneration. "Now as Vicar General - I can give the Imprimatur on anything that comes from one who is a subject of this diocese or which is published here. So if the author is from here or it is made here I can act on it - otherwise it must come from the diocese of the author. "If the medal is made here I can act; I can also consider you in an indirect way as being from Dayton Motherhouse as from this diocese. Of course Bishop Rehring has full power to act, too, should you want his approval. "At any rate if it falls in my jurisdiction I approve it."

5. Excerpt from Rev. Mother's letter "Let us pray that through the intercession of our Blessed Lady Communism may be crushed. Let us often repeat this prayer, "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us."

Note: May be working points in preparation for meeting with Bishop Rehring after suggestion from +PFL

5. Excerpt from Rev. Mother's letter "Let us pray that through the intercession of our Blessed Lady Communism may be crushed. Let us often repeat this prayer, "By thy Holy and Immaculate Conception, O Mary, deliver us."

6. Contents of leaflet to be printed a. Explanation of Doctrine of Divine Indwelling Presence with special application to children and the family. b. An explanation of the medal and its significance, especially for our times. c. Drawings of Our Lady of America and a picture of both sides of the medal. d. Special points to be emphasized in order to help foster devotion to Divine Indwelling:

1) A diligent striving to recall frequently the Divine Presence within us.

2) Reading and meditating of this holy Doctrine so that that the truth may gradually grow upon us, and that we may want to pass it on to others.

3) Frequent recitation of Prayer to our Lady of America, Patroness of our Land, so that we may become docile instruments in our Lady's hands to further the glory of the Most Holy Trinity dwelling in our souls.

3) Encouraging the recitation of the rosary as a family prayer for the sanctification of the family and the home.

4) A study of the life of the Holy Family so that we may imitate their way of life in every circumstance, under the Divine Eye of the Indwelling Presence.

5) To work zealously to make our homes like the Home at Nazareth so that in these homes there may dwell holy families who will give unceasing glory to the Divine Trinity by their holy living.

June 29, 1961, Feast of Sts. Peter & Paul (Archbishop Leibold had a wooden plaque made of Our Lady of America, first image of Her, besides Sister's sketch) Dear Bishop, What a joy your latest letter gave me. All your letters do of course but this time there was an extra – special reason for it and without doubt you know why. Very, very particular thanks for the snapshot of the plaque. It seems to be a very fine piece of work. If it falls far, far short of the mark as I know it must that was because my attempted drawing of the reality was the worst ever and impossible to depict as it truly was. I would never have tried to make a second drawing of it and never will. If Our Lady hadn't asked me to do it for her I would never have dared on my own. Sister M. Florecita is very happy about the plaque and told me to be sure to tell you to have one made for us as soon as possible. Of course I wholeheartedly agreed. You know my feelings concerning it could never be adequately expressed much less written. How happy I am that you, Bishop, are the first to have had this picture of Her made. I am sure Our Lady is much pleased with your great love and devotion not to mention your unceasing efforts to help fulfill her desires in your own zealous and wonderful way. As for myself you must know that it is beyond means of expression; my gratitude to you, Bishop. I leave it to our loving Father to repay you as only He can...

July 1, 1961 – (SME clarifies details for the medal. The Cloister chapel is remodeled at the full donation of Archbishop Leibold's Aunt, Mrs. Helen Whitta of Fostoria, Ohio, seven miles from the Cloister) Dear Bishop, I had meant to explain something to you about the medal but just didn't happen to get it in my last letters. So here it is. Mention was made in the letter which the Company wrote to you that the Triangle enclosing the image of Our Lady was eliminated. Maybe you wondered at my remarks about it. I had forgotten that in making a copy of the medal I had left it in the form of a shield. Therefore Our Lady was necessarily enclosed in the reverse side of the shield. I shouldn't really have drawn it that way because such a shaped medal would have been difficult to make as well as difficult to wear or carry about on one's person. Since the medal will be circular in shape it is necessary that the form of the shield be stamped on one side only, the most important, in this chase the symbol of the Trinity, to satisfy the request made. It is taken for granted that Our Lady's image is on the other side of the

shield with out this being exactly depicted. Otherwise the image of Our Lady would have had to be squeezed into too small a space and the subsequent result would have been poor. By the way Bishop, I should have told you long ago that we remodeled our small cloister chapel last Spring. It is really beautiful now and looks quite monastic too, with ten large stalls facing the middle aisle. The job of remodeling really turned out to be a bigger job than we had anticipated but our good friend, your Aunt, Mrs. Helen Whitta of Fostoria shouldered the entire financial burden. We are certainly grateful for her goodness to us. How anxious we are for you to get a good look of our heavenly, little chapel. Do come as soon as you are able to do so. I would especially love to have you come. How will you know that Bishop. Incidentally, Mrs. H.W Whitta told us to be sure to tell you that whenever you come up this way to please stop off at Fostoria to visit her. Her home is only seven miles away from here. I want you to get this letter quickly as I always make you wait much too long whenever I do write. I want to make up for it at least this time. God bless you dear Bishop. My eternal gratitude to you for everything. Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem

Sept. 1, 1961 (The Motherhouse is printing the manuscripts. Sister Florecita speaks with the Reverend Mother about stepping down, promoting enthusiastically Sister Mary Ephrem to take over. SME speaks highly of Sister Florecita) Dear Bishop, There is an opportunity at this time of having some more manuscripts printed at the Motherhouse. So if you are in need of anymore of them or would like to have more copies on hand please let me know as soon as possible. We would be most happy to send you as many as you may wish Bishop. We are going to have quite a few made for ourselves as we didn't have too many in the first place and so are just about out of them. More than once Sister Florecita has been stating the fact that this is her last year in office. So, when Rev. Mother was here the other week, Sister mentioned this subject to her. Rev. Mother then asked Sister if she thought this little scrub Sister could take over the job. Sister Florecita was most enthusiastic and, I'm sure, gave a much better account of me than I deserved. Sister could hardly wait to tell me about it. But this is secret news as yet so you'll have to keep it to yourself until further notice. Sister Florecita's term does not expire until the latter part of August or the first part of September. So I'll be needing some exceptionally big and special prayers Bishop. You have a hard task ahead of you. Maybe you had better begin right now. Sister Florecita is truly a very fine person, so faithful and so utterly loyal. She is also exceptionally fearless and courageous even when she has had to face opposition from Higher Authority. Yet with all this Sister is always and at all times most respectful and obedient no matter what contrary views she may have had. How often I have seen this in action and have greatly respected and (copy of letter ends here)

Sept. 18, 1961 (Archbishop Leibold sends a wooden plaque of Our Lady of America to the Cloister. The Sisters make Christmas cards, the Cloistered sisters have a printer and this is a means of income, and wish to send some for free to the Archbishop. She requests any unused breviaries) Sisters Of The Precious Blood Our Lady Of The Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, How kind of you to think of me again on my special day. But the plaque was expensive enough so you should not have sent the extra. But that is because you are just too good, so what can I do but say, thank you again for your generosity. We are in the midst of making our Christmas cards Bishop and will soon have a certain number packed off to the Chancery. Now what Sister Florecita wants to know is how many cards would you like for yourself. There will absolutely be no cost on these for you. So please let us know the number as soon as you can and also if you would like your name printed on the inside. By the way you don't happen to know of three old breviaries that wouldn't mind being used by three old Sisters at the New Riegel Cloister. Our breviaries & Sisters new ones have been ordered but are still in the making. In the meantime we would like to be – come better acquainted with the Matins and do a bit of preliminary practicing. Now remember, old ones. I'm glad you so enjoyed your visit here Bishop. I can never tell you adequately what it meant to me to be able to talk with you again. Sister M. Linus sent us a couple copies of your excellent sermon. What a fine and good person she is. I was happy to be able to talk to her about what was most precious and dear to my heart. It looks like you can never stop running around. What a life for a poor Auxiliary Bishop but it seems to be the usual

one. Yes I have read of the secular institutes. Certainly a wonderful apostolate, but they are not the only ones who do what the Bishop tells them. After all what have I been doing most of my life – obeying you. (ha)...

Jan. 7, 1962 (SME replies to Archbishop Leibold's inquiry as to Archbishop Alter's having received the manuscript. His Grace, Archbishop Alter only asked Sister to petition Our Lady for a Miracle. Sister obey and petitioned Our Lady, Who said the medal would be the instrument for a Sign, Miracle, as Promised. Reluctant to tell this to His Grace, Our Lady had Sister do so. Sister speaks of the Holy Family, the earthly trinity) You mentioned some time ago about Archbishop's attitude in regard to the contents of the manuscript and thought I knew about it. But the only time His Grace wrote was to acknowledge receiving the manuscript. His Grace expressed surprise concerning it and ask for time to study and think it over. He also asked that I petition Our Lady for a sign, a miracle of some kind. Now Bishop I knew for a long time that the medal would be the instrument through which Our Lady would bestow the signs and wonders which she had promised. When His Grace then asked me to petition for a sign, a miracle, I did so in obedience to his wishes. But Our Lady simply renewed her promise concerning the medal and I was asked to make this known to His Grace. But I held back, not wanting to explain to His Grace about the medal knowing how he felt about medals anyway. But I had no peace and so, though surmising what the outcome would be, I wrote to His Grace as Our Lady had directed me. He never answered the letter but then I really hadn't expected him to. So that was the way it went Bishop. I had wanted to tell you this for a long time Bishop but somehow didn't get around to it for one reason or another. I hope you are not having too much trouble having the medal struck. I am praying that everything goes all right. How indebted I am to you Bishop. I am so deeply grateful. On this beautiful feast of the Holy Family what more could I wish you but that you may be steeped in the awareness and love of the Divine Presence as They were. All their labors, all their efforts were directed to the glory and praise of the Divine Majesty Who truly dwell in and with Them in a most exalted degree. Yet They lived a life of such hiddenness and simplicity that not even those who observed Them daily could distinguish anything different about Them. What lessons They teach us of love, humility, and indeed, of all the virtues. The heavenly Trinity and the earthly trinity, how truly they belong together – and to us. My very special thanks for the gifts. They are of great help to us. But I am particularly grateful for your prayers and remembrance at Mass. With respect and gratitude, Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

March 3, 1962 – (SME quotes from a book that touches on her spirituality of the Divine Indwelling. Rome requested 20 copies of the Cloister Constitution, the Sisters ask the Archbishop's prayers) ...I don't know if you have Raoul Plus's book, "In Christ Jesus". It is very good and in perusing it one day I came across these words which for me contained world's of meaning. It is what I myself have felt so strongly for a long, long time. "*Our conception of the world is too often pagan, because we do not get beyond the visible, and the only thing on earth that interests God – God in souls, that is – has no interest for us. Let us get used to giving to the real its true value and to regarding the kingdom of the Most High in our soul and in the souls of others as the one thing necessary.*" I could go meditating on the above words hours on end without ever tiring of it. Sister Florecita said to be sure to tell you of a very important item which means so very much to all of us. Rome asked for 20 copies of the Cloister Constitution. That gives us some hope that things are moving a little anyway. The 20 copies have already been sent. So keep up your good prayers for us. You see that they are bringing results faster than we dared expect. I hope you are well Bishop. Of course you never tell me when you aren't. Anyway, don't be too hard on yourself, especially during Lent. I know you. God bless you Bishop! Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

April 20, 1962 – (The Cloistered sisters pray the Latin Breviary, while previously had the English, and so they studied the English and now more acquainted to pray and chant the Latin Divine Office. SME expresses a willingness to the use of the vernacular, and music, if it had the solemn dignity and beauty of the Gregorian ...I suppose you wonder about us having to chant from the Latin Breviary. Well the truth is Bishop there really isn't a good translation in English. Besides that we are supposed to sing some parts of the Divine Office and we can't do that with the vernacular. So we really had no choice. Maybe someday there will be a good rendition in the vernacular, music and all comparable in some way perhaps to the solemn dignity and beauty of the Gregorian.

That of course would solve, to a certain extent anyway, the vernacular problem. But what we are doing is this. Before we had the Latin, Sister Florecita got us the breviary in English. So we are studying the psalms, etc. in the vernacular, also using them for part of our mental prayer. In this way we are becoming acquainted gradually to the meaning of the Latin as we sing and chant the Divine Office. It really helps a great deal and so is not half as bad as you may think it is. We really love the Divine Office Bishop. It is so filled with spiritual doctrine and beauty.

July 17, 1962 (SME asks Archbishop Leibold for Mass stipends to help the Cloisters' life, centered on the Holy Sacrifice and the Divine Office, to render praise and glory to the Triune God in the most fitting way possible. The Cloister chapel is separate from the Parish. A C.P.P.S. Priest who loves the Holy Sacrifice and Divine Office, visits the Cloister often on Sundays and Holy days, and would chant Vespers with the sisters, alternately. They anticipate a permanent Chaplain) Cloistered Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Convent New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, We were just wondering if you could help us out a bit. Since we have been granted the privilege of Divine Office in Choir we are entitled to a Conventual Mass. The Conventual Mass Rubrics of 1960 reads: Of itself, the Conventual Mass should be solemn, or at least sung. So we have been trying to have a Missa Cantata daily. Our great difficulty of course concerns the matter of stipends as there are only a few scattered families in this area. These, of course give their Mass stipends to the Parish Church. Bishop, do you ever have extra Mass stipends over and above what you can take care of at St. Louis Church? If so we would be most grateful if you could send them to us. It would be greatly appreciated. Our entire life has now become centered around the Holy Sacrifice and the Divine Office. Anything we can do to enhance the external ceremonies of these two great and sacred acts will be an added joy to us and a further incentive to render praise and glory to the Triune God in the most fitting way possible. In this, one can never be too reverent or too exact. God deserves our best. We have been without a regular Chaplain, so this summer we have been having substitutes. The one, Father Louis Gelhaus C.P.P.S. will be stationed at St. Mark's, Cincinnati as a Missionary. He promised to give greetings from us to you if ever he had the pleasure of meeting you. Father is a very fine priest, greatly in love with the Liturgy and the Divine Office. Whenever he could, like Sundays and Holy Days, he would chant Vespers with us, alternately and once Compline too. He was the first to ask us if he could chant Vespers with us. We were very happy of course as we had never had the privilege of having a priest sing the Office with us. He loved to do it and did so whenever he could. He will be leaving here for Cin. Aug. 29th. That is the day our permanent Chaplain is to come. We're hoping he too will be interested in the Liturgy and in chanting the Office. It was such a treat for us this summer.

Aug. 6, 1962 (Archbishop Leibold ordered and received medals according to the design of SME. The Cloister sisters had printed images of Our Lady of America, prayer and brochures made, offering copies to the Archbishop to distribute with the medals) Dear Bishop, I can't help thanking you again for the wonderful news about the medal. And it came just in time for my birthday too. What an unforgettable gift. God reward your faithfulness and your generous heart. Enclosed is one of the brochures we put together not too long ago. What a job that was. The printers made it up of course but we Sisters did the initial work which was the most tedious and laborious part of it. We were afraid of what the price would be if we had them do the whole process. So you see we've been busy in more ways than one. Then, also enclosed is a sample copy of a picture of Our Lady of America. This was taken from a cut, an engraving we just recently had made. Sister thought you might want to have a good copy in case you would want it for some particular purpose. In sending along the enclosed prayers we wanted to give you an idea of the printing we are and can do. Sister Florecita said to tell you that whenever you should need or want any of these prayer cards to let us know and we will be happy to supply them. This way you will be able to save a little as there will be no cost for any of these that we send you, none whatsoever. They are yours for the asking, always. That goes for prints of the picture of Our Lady too. If you should want anymore brochures, just let me know and these will be gladly sent to you.

Aug. 24, 1962 (Archbishop Leibold and Archbishop Alter attend the second Vatican Council) ...As far as we're concerned Bishop, especially me, you're the most important personage going to Rome in Oct. I'm sure the Council won't begin without you. His Grace will make you a very nice and honorable companion. I think he is very lucky.

Nov. 13, 1962 (SME received news of the death of her mother. She is sure Our Lady came for her, as she taught sister and her siblings to love Our Lady. She asks the Archbishop for prayers for her mother and her sister who also died the same year. Sister does not regret giving herself entirely to Our Lord's Good Pleasure in spite of the pains) Sisters Of The Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Cloister New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Yesterday, Nov. 12, I received news of my dear mother's death. She will be buried Wed. Nov. 13 from Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Cleveland, Ohio. I do not yet know the details of her passing away but will let you know later. What I do know is that no one could have been more ready. I'm sure Our Lady came for her, Our Lady whom she loved so dearly all her life and taught us, her children, to love. Should she however be need of prayer I beg your kindness in this regard, also my dear sister, Irma who died April 5 of this same year. God's hand has been heavy on me this year but I do not regret having given myself entirely to His Good Pleasure. That is why I was born. God bless you Bishop. Pray for me. My heart is sore. Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Nov. 20, 1962 (SME explains her mother's death was due to a stroke after the unexpected death of her sister, and then her mother, recovering some, became ill, and being weakened, died very peacefully. She speaks of her father's death eleven years before. Sister's brother John gives her mother's ring to her, and she places it on the blessing fingers of the Infant of Prague. The Archbishop returns from the Council in Rome and gives the sisters medals from the Council. He continues to send stipends to support the Cloister) Cloistered Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Convent New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Thank you so much for the Mass for my dear mother. The consoling thoughts contained in your most welcome letter did me so much good. As a fellow orphan you would be one to understand and fully sympathize with my feelings at this time. After my sister's death in April, a death unexpected by everyone since she hadn't even been ailing, the shock of it caused my mother to have a stroke. She came out of it quite well though so that she had of late been able to walk a bit, besides being able to feed herself, etc. It was amazing that she came out of the stroke at all, much less recuperate as she was doing. But then she caught a cold and of course she didn't have the necessary strength to fight it. Her age and weakened condition were against her. She went very peacefully and without pain. My father died Dec. 17, 1951 Monday morning at around 2:00 o'clock. My mother also died on a Monday around 1:30, but on a different date, Nov. 12, 1962. Both shortly before Christmas, my sister Irma during lent, just a few weeks before Easter. So these two great feast will always hold poignant memories for me. My brother John brought me our mother's wedding ring. As a result of the stroke her hand had swelled a bit so they had to cut the ring to get it off her finger. I placed the ring on the two uplifted fingers of our little Infant of Prague statue. I'm sure father and mother both approve of this and are pleased to have the ring where it is. My dear mother has already obtained for me the grace of not grieving too much for how can I grieve when she is happy and at peace. I keep thinking of Our Lord's words "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." She is closer to me now than she ever was. I not only feel this strongly but know it to be true. How nice of you to send us each a medal of the Council. We appreciate this a very great deal. So you are happy to be home, well we are more than happy to have you back. Cincinnati is far enough away but Rome is worse. The medals arrived safely and they are beautiful. All the details are clearly outlined. I suppose that is why the medals is larger than ordinary. The other sisters the medals wondered why they hadn't been struck according to the ordinary size. But we have them and feel that the work on the medal is well done. God bless you for this Bishop, how good you are. Enclosed is a picture of my beloved father and mother, also a memorial card of mother's passing away. Sometime soon we will send you some packs of "Our Lady of America" leaflets. We just finished them, that is the amount we were able to print for now. I will try to get them to you as soon as possible. Special thanks for the stipends for 20 Masses. It helps us out quite a bit. God bless you Bishop. I am deeply grateful to you for everything. Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Nov. 29, 1962 (SME speaks of troubles with the old printer at the Cloister. Leaflets - also called brochures provide a picture of Our Lady of America with prayers, and some of the medal with explanation— are printed at a professional printer. Reverend Mother asked for leaflets to give to each Sister at Christmas – unclear if only Sisters at the Motherhouse or throughout the Order. SME mentions a letter from Reverend Mother, who is pleased with the medal and is wearing it) Dear Bishop, Here are the leaflets at last. They aren't as nice as we wanted them to be but it was the best we could do. We'll have to look around for some printer who perhaps would do up these leaflets for us at a low cost. Our printing press is an old one and only useful for small ordinary printing jobs. Besides this Rev. Mother asked for some of the leaflets as she wants to give each Sister one at Christmas time. So we were kept busy printing enough so we could give you some too and have a couple packs left for ourselves. So you see, we and our old press are having our problems. It surprises us that we are able to produce our greeting cards at all. But in spite of all the trouble, we managed somehow. We have not given out any medals as yet, except that we sent one to Rev. Mother who said in a letter that she was very pleased with it and is wearing it. We will wait for the leaflets of explanation on the medal, as you suggested, before distributing them...

Nov. 30, 1962 (Archbishop Leibold's Aunt Helen has supported the Cloister from it's beginning, living in nearby Fostoria. The sisters entrusted the manuscript, the full story with her, and she will travel to the Chancery to visit Archbishop Leibold and bring back medals and more leaflets, with his permission. His Aunt Helen is most anxious to spread the devotion and message with his advice) Dear Bishop, Just received your very and most interesting packet. The leaflets are fine. You certainly did a wonderful job. I don't know if that is the correct way of expressing my gratitude but you understand me and so that is enough for me. I'm sure you know by this time that your Aunt Helen has been the friend of the Cloister from the very beginning. She is always so very kind and helpful to us. Since she lives in Fostoria we see her every now and then as the distance is not great. Early this year we mentioned the manuscript to Helen and permitted her to read it. We know that she is most trustworthy and will be most discreet about the whole thing. Now she has offered to go to Cincinnati, to the Chancery that is, to get the rest of the leaflets and medals which have on hand there. Besides this your Aunt Helen is anxious to see you anyway and have a nice talk. So I hope all will be satisfactory to you Bishop. We know that your Aunt will greatly enjoy her visit with you. Now if you will let one of us know, either your Aunt or myself, if all this meets with your approval Bishop we would be glad. We would like to know as soon as possible, or rather as soon as your convenience permits. I know you are so very busy. I was sorry to hear about the accident. Your Guardian Spirit must have taken good care of you. Think of what could have happened. I hope you will soon feel your old self again. Maybe this is the only way to get you to "ease up" a bit. Not a very nice way, though, is it. By the way, I should have mentioned this before, your Aunt Helen wants to ask you some questions about the distribution of the medals, etc. She would like more information as she is most interested in spreading the devotion and message. You are the very best if not the only one to give her the necessary advice. God reward you Bishop. You have my eternal gratitude. My prayers are always with you. Please continue to keep me in yours. Gratefully, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem

Jan. 2, 1963 (The Cloistered Sisters become acquainted with a missionary Priest from India who makes statues and crucifixes for the benefit of his poor community. He made one for the Cloister – not clear if it is of Our Lady of America. SME asks the Archbishop for the needed Imprimatur on the medal before distribution, and without the Cloister address on the leaflet to safeguard the Cloister) Feast of the Holy Name Cloistered Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Convent New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Happy New Year! May it be filled with many and abundant graces for you. We are so glad you like the statue. As I believe I mentioned before, we became acquainted with a missionary priest in India. He has since been appointed the new Provincial there. We know that he will be most grateful for any orders for statues. They make different types, crucifixes also. The people there are so poor, so the missionaries try to help them as much as possible with food, etc. I'm sure you can have carved any statue you wish. The one we sent you cost twenty dollars. We didn't think of mentioning about the plate but then we don't know what they would have done about that. We had the plate made by a jeweler here.

This item cost about two fifty. So the whole thing came up to around twenty three dollars. Of course the statue we sent you had to be custom made and that naturally brought up the price. This is that missionaries address Very Rev. Francis Sales, C.M.I Sacred Heart Provincial House Kalamasery P.O., Kerala, India. Bishop, I just want to mention something concerning the leaflet that goes with the medal. I cannot find any Imprimatur on it any where and you know nothing can be distributed without that especially something like this. It is very likely the printers error in failing to print it, that is, the approval. Also having the address on the leaflet could get the cloister into grave and serious trouble. This most probably was not thought of at the time of the assembling and printing. Please write as soon as your convenience permits Bishop. I would be most grateful. The Cloister must be safeguarded at all costs. I know you will take the same stand Bishop as you know all the implications connected with something like this. Thank you Bishop for all your trouble and God bless you. Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Jan. 25, 1963 (SME explains that the Cloister would like the address to remain on the leaflet as they would like to make the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling a special apostolate of the Cloister. She asks about an Imprimatur on the leaflet to advance the devotion more quickly and fruitfully. SME relates to the Archbishop how the three members of the Cloister consider the path to obtain the necessary approvals. The work is being done in Bishop Rehring's diocese, who has not been supportive. She recalls a similar situation in another US Cloister that turned out to be have fraudulent visions. That Sister and her Superior are now seculars. SME expresses this mission is of the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling, a dogma of the Church, and so Imprimatur, Censor, etc., also an indulgence for the two prayers are necessary, especially to not offend the local Bishop) Dear Bishop, Thank you so much for your prompt reply to my letter. The way you amended the leaflet is just fine. You know the curiosity and sensational seekers. They could make and cause more trouble than anyone else about something like this. Coming back to the leaflet, we thought that the Cloister address would not now need to be eliminated because as it stands now, the leaflet, there shouldn't be any trouble. You see Bishop, we would like to make the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling a special apostolate of our Cloister. Of course Our Lady comes in on this too as a very, important helper to guide us in spreading the knowledge and love of this Divine Doctrine. After all it was this part of her message over which she was most concerned. Now this question: Would it be possible to have your imprimatur on the leaflet or does His Grace have to have his on too? We feel that the imprimatur would carry more weight and help bring forward the devotion much more quickly and fruitfully than just the Ecclesiastical Approval. In case you would not be able to go along with this do you think you could get someone else, like Bishop Mussio for instance? Of course, I would prefer if it could be done by you Bishop. By the way, when the leaflet first reached us and we read one through we were in sort of a turmoil not knowing exactly what to do. Since we are in Bishop Rehring's territory we realized the situation to be quite a delicate one. So we three talked it over and decided that since Bishop had just returned from Rome he would be exceptionally busy and for that reason it would be better to speak to Msgr. Kinane, the Vicar General. We three then decided further that it was better for me to stay out of the picture so Sister M. Florecita was appointed to contact the Vicar General. This, Sister did as soon as possible. So Bishop Rehring probably knows about it by this time but hasn't mentioned anything yet. I really don't think he ever will, but at least he is now informed about our action. About three or four years ago Msgr. Yates, Chancellor, wrote to us in no uncertain terms telling us that Bishop Rehring did not want us to have printed any new prayers that were not contained in the Raccolta. You can readily understand why we got so jittery when we looked over the leaflet. We were really quite disturbed for a few days not knowing what to do. As I mentioned before, our Cloister being in Bishop Rehring's diocese, our situation was worse than ever. So really, our concern was not due so much to a keen, female mind but partly because we do not wish to offend His Excellency. After all, we do respect and esteem him highly. Then too, we were recently told of a similar incident that occurred in one of our Cloisters in this country. A would be visionary turned out to be a fraud. There was a good bit of advertisement about her wonderful revelations, etc. The priest who had direct context with the Cloister told us the whole story. It certainly made us think. We don't want anything to happen like that here. Both the visionary and her Superior were sent away from the Cloister. They are both seculars now,

still living. And all that I have said above is the reason why I am anxious to have full ecclesiastical approval before any printing is done. Since there will be no allusion to anything extraordinary in the leaflet I feel that we can receive the same approval as the prayers to the Sacred Heart you once sent to me - Imprimatur, Censor, etc., also an indulgence for the two prayers. I do not feel that we are asking too much as the Doctrine of the Divine Indwelling is a dogma of the Church and certainly one of the greatest. We are enclosing the patched up leaflet for your inspection and approval. One more petition Bishop, and that is for Mass Stipends. We do hope you have some extra on hand to send us. You know how very grateful we are for this. Since we are most anxious to get at printing the leaflet as soon as possible, I do hope to hear from you in the near future, always at your convenience of course. I realize how busy you are, yet I know that you can readily understand and appreciate my concern regarding the medal and leaflet, also my great and most pressing desire to get them distributed as soon as possible. God bless you Bishop. Please continue to remember our Cloister in your prayers. I most appreciate your remembrance of me at the Holy Sacrifice. I beg you to continue to do so. With respect and gratitude, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem P.S. Happy Conversion Day! (ha!) I hope St. Paul isn't too hard on you Bishop. [My special prayers.]

March 1, 1963 (The Sisters continue wish to give medals and leaflets to the Parish families but they are in Cincinnati. SME continues to make her desire to remain hidden known to Archbishop Leibold, and that Our Lady wants the people to know Her messages) I hope you will continue to let others know – they must know, But leave me out please. It is better that I remain hidden, in the background, but you are under no such restriction. Our Lady wants the people to know and who can do it better than you, Bishop. Pray for me! God bless you!

April 5, 1963 (Archbishop Leibold's brother will assist in delivering medals to the Cloister) Cloistered Sisters of the Precious Blood Our Lady of the Nativity Convent New Riegel, Ohio Dear Bishop, Many thanks for your prompt reply to my letter. After talking it over we decided that it would be better if you left the medals with your brother at Ft. Loramie. Sister M. Leo's relatives live out that way and so they will be able to bring the medals with them when they come to visit Sister. We can't rely on anyone's going or coming from Maria Stein and coming our way. They very seldom pass by here and so we could never be certain when we would be able to get the medals. Your brother would take good care of them and Sister's people will see to their deliverance as soon as possible. We don't have any idea as yet what printing the leaflet will cost but will let you know how things are going and the results. We will keep you informed. Bishop, could you please send us some more Mass Stipends if you should have any? Thank you for your kindness. I'm sure you will all need a vacation after Holy Week, especially the one who had to make out the schedule. I am not surprised to hear that Our Lady is so busy. Saving the souls for whom her dear Son suffered and died is one of the greatest of her joys. Gratefully, in the heart of this beloved Mother, Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Aug. 27, 1963 (Archbishop Leibold does not approve of SME being in charge of the Cloister. Sister concurs, and expresses her inabilities as she is of the artistic temperament, not an organizer or manager, and she can do more for the mission with Sister Florecita in charge while she is able. As the medals and leaflets are being distributed, interest is growing, even one claims a healing due to their use. Sister is asked to give a little conference at the Cloister on the Trinity at work in the life of Christ. Christ came to teach us how to live the Trinitarian life according to His own example, for we are to become other Christs. To this end He shed every drop of His Blood. How often we barely touch upon this truth, yet it is the most important) No, I was not shocked at your hoping what Father H. told you about me was true. I knew all along that you did not approve of my being placed in charge. You did not feel that I belonged in that position. You were right, of course. I can do much more for God and the mission as a subject, under obedience. After all, my abilities run in an altogether different direction. I am not an executive, organizer or manager. You know that I am of an artistic temperament. I don't have a practical bone in me. That ought to give you a good enough idea about me without saying anything else. So, the conclusion is, that, you just can't have anyone of such a type at the head. But, above all this, I felt that the Cloister was still too young to have someone new at the head. I am convinced that, when God has a special work for someone to

do, He gives that someone special light and help to accomplish it. So, as long as Sister Florecita is able, I feel that she should head and guide the Cloister until it is more firmly established. Besides this, God has endowed Sister with all the necessary spiritual and natural qualifications needed to further the great works of the Cloister. When Rev. Mother was here in May I spoke to her about all this, that is, about my incompetence and my convictions concerning Sister Florecita and the Cloister. Thanks to the dear Lord, everything is as it should be now and I am happy. So, thank you for your prayers. I'm sure you must have prayed me out of the position as you felt so strongly that it was not for me. How well you know me. Our Lady is taking good care of her project or should I say St. Joseph is doing it for her. I am sure he is most delighted to do so. I'm sure, also, that we will never really know how much Our Lady meant to him. Coming back to the project, we just recently received a call for thirty more leaflets and medals. The party in question is taking these to the priest director of their CFM group who had requested them. A lady friend of ours attributes her return to health to the medal and prayer to the Immaculate Conception. A protestant lady, whose husband is a protestant missionary, became interested in the leaflet and so asked our friend if she would be allowed to pray it too. Now, she is also praying to Our Lady and she isn't the only one. What do you think of that? Ever since we've had the medals and leaflets on hand Our Lady has been sending us promoters, both priests and lay men. Someday, when you stop off here, for a change, I'll be able to tell you more. If I would try doing it by letter I would never get finished.

...I had better end this letter in a little more spiritual vein. It seems, I always remember the nonsense. Maybe that's because my head doesn't resemble heaven. I've been appointed to give a little conference on the Sunday Gospel for each week, with the particular object of showing the Trinity at work in the life of Christ. Say a little prayer for me so that the Holy Spirit may be able to penetrate my dullness. Christ came to teach us how to live the Trinitarian life according to His own example, for we are to become other Christs. To this end He shed every drop of His Blood. How often we barely touch upon this truth, yet it is the most important...

Sept. 16, 1963 (Becoming more evident is the lack of new Sisters to the Cloister, unless older and set in their ways, not well disposed for Cloistered life. The authorities leave Sisters to feel selfish in their efforts within the Cloister rather than the active apostolate, combined with criticism. The Cloister Sisters are informed no new Sisters for the next year or two. They seek Archbishop Leibold's advice. Additionally, no orders for cards will come from the Motherhouse or Community Houses, preventing this necessary income. One of the new sisters, while complaining about being cold and not having honey on the table, is asking for more penances. This seems contrary to the simple Cloister life. The Sisters are seeking donors for the new printer, though it has limitations due to expenses they cannot afford. Further, the Cloister is asked to contribute to the Motherhouse, though hardly able to support themselves. Efforts continue to make Our Lady of America's medal distributed) ... You know by this time, Bishop, what a hard time we are having to fill our ranks with members from our own Community. It is true that we have two more now, but, good as they are, these two, dear Sisters are close to fifty, if not that already. It is almost impossible at that age, or even forty, to adapt oneself to a new program of living, spiritually and otherwise. At those ages most people are too well set to be able to change in any notable respect. New members for the Cloister must be younger than that, while they are still at the pliable ages. But here we are up a blank wall, Bishop. We simply can't move the Authorities. They just are not interested, it seems. We do not believe that they really realize or appreciate the importance of the Cloistered life. How often we have been made to feel that it would be much better and we more unselfish if would work for the Community in the active apostolate. We get no encouragement, only criticism for all our efforts. We have already been informed that we will not receive any new members next year, and, who knows, very likely not the following year either. It is hard to understand, but I guess in dealing with human beings, even the best, you come up against things like this and worse. So, we are almost being forced to look elsewhere for members. What do you think of the idea? We, especially Sister Florecita, would greatly appreciate any advice or encouragement you can give, Bishop. Of course, only Sisters specially approved by the Authorities in their Community are permitted to enter a Cloister. So really, the best only would seek to enter. We just have to do something, Bishop, because things just can't go on this way. I'm

sure you can very well understand that. We know that you sincerely sympathize with us, Bishop, and so will try to help us in every way you can. For this we are deeply grateful to you. There is another thing that has been brought to our attention. I have enclosed a sample of the cards that the Motherhouse is sending to all the houses of the Community. Naturally, the Superiors have to take them. What else can they do. So that means the Sisters will no longer order cards from us. The printing and sale of our own cards is a source of a little extra income for us, Bishop, and now even this is being taken away from us. All these things hurt me deeply. We have worked and struggled and suffered so long. Then to see ourselves pushed against the wall in this fashion just when we are beginning to get on our feet – what shall I say, Bishop. Surely I have no intention of complaining against Gods Will, but it still stands that we have and are being badly dealt with. I know that these trials are permitted by God but He does want us to help ourselves too in every way we can and that is why this letter is being written. I trust you so completely Bishop. I can't think a better person to go to, nor do I have any desire to go to anyone else. You have never yet failed me and I know you never will. I have regressed a bit, Bishop, forgive me. But to get back to the cards. The Superior of the teachers, who, as you know, live downstairs here, told Sister Florecita that the cards were presented to her. So, she took a hundred of them and asked the price. A donation was requested. Sister asked if fifteen dollars would be acceptable. She was told that, that amount would barely cover the Masses promised. So, Sister ended by giving twenty-five dollars. Now she feels badly because she cannot buy cards from us. Talking about money – Rev. Mother was here the other day and during her visit made the remark to Sister Florecita that because of the two Sisters, who were taken out of teaching to enter the Cloister, the Community is losing \$6,000 a year. You could sense the regret that they were allowed to enter at all. Since I have brought up the two new members again I might as well mention another problem that confronts us. One of these Sisters often complains about the cold. Then insisted that honey should be served at table. At the same time she asked Sister Florecita if she could wear a hair shirt. Something's wrong somewhere. Sister Florecita often tells us that it is not for us to be seeking out extraordinary penance. If we live our Cloistered life as perfectly as possible, accepting all the sufferings, trials and mortifications of that life as a proof of our love for God and His Will, we will live heroically and will be most pleasing to God. There can be great pride in doing the extraordinary. It is much safer to remain in littleness and simplicity all the way 'round.

Oh yes, I want to tell you also about the new press we have now. The cost was close to \$5,000. It is a German make. The agent whom we contacted, told us that if that same press had been manufactured over here, it would have cost at least \$10,000, double the amount that we had to pay. You know, our old press was causing us a great deal of trouble so we had to start thinking of a new one if we wanted our printing business not only to improve but even to last. Of course, with the small income that comes in we could never have been able to get the press. So Sister Florecita worked hard all summer writing to different people for donations. She often stayed up till midnight to do this. We have such a full program that there hardly ever is any time during the day to do this. She would not let us stay up however. Since we get up at one o'clock every morning for Matins and Lauds, Sister feels we need the sleep. The seventy-five dollars you so kindly sent me Bishop, is being used to help on the payment. Donations never seem to cover everything, and as it is, they are hard to come by. I'm sure you know this by experience. In regard to our printing we can only take on small jobs like, letterhead, bill heads, envelopes, call cards, etc. So if you should come across anyone who would be interested, perhaps you could send them our way. The reason why we cannot take on bigger jobs is that we do not have enough type. We cannot afford to get more as it is so very expensive. Sister Florecita and I have always worked as one. So whatever hurts the Cloister is deeply felt by both of us. But God's hand is certainly here and we are happy in His care of us and the Cloister we love, come what may...

P.S 1 Bishop, there is nothing personal in what I wrote in this letter. What I mean is, neither Sister Florecita or myself have anything against anyone, personally. I just felt that you should know the facts, all of them, and so Sister permitted me to write, as she feels the same way about all this as I do. We want you to know what we are up against, hemmed in, as we are, on every side. We were asked to contribute to the Motherhouse. We did so for

sometime but we were obliged to stop as we can hardly support ourselves as it is. P.S. 2 I am anxiously awaiting your answer to my last letter concerning Mr. Pflaum and the medal. It's my first big chance as I mentioned to you. If you can give us some outline or advice on how to proceed I will be eternally grateful to you. I know you are as deeply interested in this as I am. This, my first big chance may be the best and for you also, Bishop. I think you understand what I mean. In fact, I know you do.

Sept. 18, 1963 (Mr. James Pflaum, editor of the Catholic Messenger, distributed in schools internationally, is interested in making know Our Lady of America and Her medals but seeks more information to do so. Sister sees this as a big opportunity to make Our Lady's mission known. At the request of the local printer, Sister asks the Bishop to connect the printing company that donated many leaflets on the medal with the Archbishop's brother) ...Sister M. Florecita is a very, good friend of Mr. James Pflaum, editor of the Catholic Messenger, etc. I'm sure, Bishop, that you are well acquainted with the Pflaum Co. because of their work in the schools. Well, this Mr. Pflaum was here recently to visit with Sister. In the course of their conversation, Sister spoke to him about the medal and leaflet. Mr. Pflaum became quite interested and voiced his desire to help in their distribution. A week or so after his visit, Mr. Pflaum wrote to Sister. Among other things, he had this to say and ask about the medal and leaflet. I quote from his letter. *"I am a little unclear about how to proceed with spreading the devotion to Our Lady of America and the prayers and medals. Doesn't there have to be some basis, or reason for them? Maybe not, but I was just wondering."* In other words, Bishop, he doesn't feel that what is contained in the leaflet is a sufficient explanation for the medal to be effectively distributed and used. So now how shall we proceed? Could you perhaps take the time, I know you don't have much of this, to write out a more enlightening or lucid explanation of the contents of the leaflet than we have done? I know that you can do this and that you will. You know, Bishop, this is my first, big opportunity to further Our Lady's cause and I am so very happy about it as I know you will be also. The Messenger is sent all over the world, reaching a great number of children, and through them the family is reached. I have always wished to do it through the children as I think they would make the best apostles for a work like this. I do so want to make the very best use of this splendid and fruitful chance to distribute the medals and leaflets. You can imagine how I feel about it, Bishop, and as I know how deeply you also feel about it, I have no doubt that you will back me up in this and help me to make the best use of this providential opportunity. I am certain that Providence is directing all this. My very, deepest appreciation for all your trouble. By the way, I just want to mention in passing, that the printer, who donated some of the leaflets, wondered, if the Company where your brother works, would consider giving him at least some of their printing jobs. This printer is a very, fine Catholic and is raising a large family. The only reason I am mentioning this, is because this good gentleman asked if I would do him this favor. Nothing about your brother was ever said to him about your brother, or the Rubber Co. where he works. This printer already knew of him and of his position in that particular Company.

Nov. 19, 1963 (The Cloister receives a large card order from Archbishop Leibold. His help in sending stipends and his own relatives to support the Cloister help keep the Cloister afloat. Additionally, he proposes help to Mr. Pflaum, though not clear here in what way) Before I get tempted to talk too much about myself, I want to express the deep gratitude of all of us here, in particular myself for your card order. Yours, Bishop, is the first, large individual order we have ever received. I chose the design I considered the very best. The other Sisters felt the same way about this design. If there are any flaws in any of them, blame me, because I had a hand in the job of producing them from beginning to end. We have informed Mr. Pflaum concerning your proposition Bishop, and are now awaiting his answer on it. As soon as we hear from him we will immediately inform you. Thank you again for your prudent and encouraging help. God bless you Bishop! Special greetings from Sister Florecita. Most gratefully, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem

Jan. 20, 1964 (With deepest gratitude, Sister receives a most beautiful blessed rosary from the Archbishop. She promises to remember him in every use of the rosary. She is inspired with, *"Many things are unanswerable because they are hidden in God. The more we seek God then, the more answers we will have to so many things*

that perplex us.”) By the way, I had wanted to tell you that, naturally, every time I use that rosary you sent me, you will be particularly remembered. Thank you, again. Before I close, I would like to share with you a thought which came to me some time ago and which I had hurriedly written down. *“Many things are unanswerable because they are hidden in God. The more we seek God then, the more answers we will have to so many things that perplex us.”* God bless you, Bishop! Pray always for, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Feb. 3, 1964 (Archbishop Leibold continues to support the Cloister, while a letter to the Cathedral meets no reply. The Archbishop sends a rosary book, encouraging prayer with Holy Scripture. SME writes, *“In our strivings to convert the world, let us take care to begin first with ourselves”*, and how essential this is to accomplish anything worthwhile for God. She prays the Holy Spirit bless his many penances, speeches, talks and travels) ... Thank you for the Stipends. How kind of you, Bishop! I had written to the Cathedral, hoping to be able to get some stipends from that direction, because I hated to be bothering you all the time. However, I received no reply, so, your thoughtfulness came at the best of times ever. Thank you also for the rosary book. It is certainly different than the usual. It is a fine idea, this making use of the very words of Scripture. We need to go back to the source. Pray that I may spend this Lent in such a way, that Our Lord may be well pleased, if not with the results, at least with the effort put forth. This reminds me of something I wrote in my notes last year – *“In our strivings to convert the world, let us take care to begin first with ourselves.”* It is a hard task, this converting of ourselves, but that is where the start must be if we hope to accomplish anything worthwhile for God. I will remember you very specially during this coming penitential season. I know you do plenty of penance without taking on new ones, penances like, giving all those speeches and going to all kinds of occasions when you would prefer staying home. I suppose you will be giving Lenten Talks too. Well, I will ask the Holy Spirit to give you, if not the gift of tongues at least the gift of words and always the right ones too. God bless you, Bishop. Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

April 2, 1964 (Another new member leaves the Cloister, *“We’ve just bent backwards trying to make it as easy for them as possible but nothing seems to help.”* Young sisters are never sent to the Cloister. *“When one really loves, even the hard things become easy. But this is a lesson not easily learned even by the best. The Sisters in the Cloister rise at one o’clock each morning for the chanting of Matins and the singing of Lauds; life is taken up with seven hours of prayer, with work sandwiched between these hours. As true daughters of Mary, the second Eve, the Sisters give first place to the spiritual, which is why they have so many more prayer hours than work hours. That is as it should be.”*) Dear Bishop, Thank you so much for the Mass Stipend and also for the “extra”. How very kind and thoughtful of you Bishop. You know how grateful I am to you. You remember my telling you about the loss of one of our new members? Well, now the other one is going in the same direction. We’ve just bent backwards trying to make it as easy for them as possible but nothing seems to help. I guess once a person is set in his ways, nothing can change him. Besides this, there seems to be no true realization about the real meaning of the Cloistered life. Each one has her own ideas about it and wants it therefore, to be run according to her way of thinking. This is especially true of those who are older in age. It is young sisters that we need and have begged for, but these have not been given us. So our trial goes on and on. Lack of members is really our only big problem. Those who have been with us find the life too hard. They feel incapable of living up to its demands. That is at least what we have been given to understand. But then, the Cloistered life is not supposed to be easy. If it were, what would be the use of it then? When one really loves, even the hard things become easy. But this is a lesson not easily learned even by the best. I don’t know if I ever told you that we rise at one o’clock each morning for the chanting of Matins and the singing of Lauds. Our life is taken up with seven hours of prayer, our work sandwiched between these hours. So, no one can say we live a life of ease, but we are happy and do not desire it otherwise. We are all daughters of Eve and so must work to earn our daily bread. But then as true daughters of Mary, the second Eve, we must give first place to the spiritual. That is why we have so many more prayer hours than work hours. That is as it should be.

...I haven't even asked you yet how you were Bishop? Do you still have endless speeches to make? You ought to be quite proficient by this time, a top notch orator. From what I read and hear, you must be doing extraordinarily well. We, and especially myself, are very proud of you. It is a privilege for our Cloister to have you as its special benefactor and friend. Sister Florecita appreciates this very much and sends you special greetings and prayers. God bless you, Bishop! Thank you for your prayers and remembrance at Mass. I am grateful for that most of all. Your very small daughter in Jesus – Sister M. Ephrem

July 10, 1964 (In honoring St. Joseph, the Cloister's provider, lilies which never bloomed, now bloomed when placing his statue on a pedestal. She mentions sufferings, though young in spirit. A friend to the Cloister donates coke, and the sisters soon realize its not good for their health and stop the sweet drink, taking up other fresh air for greater health benefits. To give greater glory to God the Sisters pray the English-Latin Breviary, to help in their knowledge of what praying or singing. Sister Florecita will ask Bishop Rehring to recite in the vernacular. Archbishop Leibold himself does this. Then, many people come to the Cloister for comfort and prayers by the Sisters, rather than to the teachers – active Sisters on another floor of the small building. This becomes a hidden apostolate for the Sisters with making known Our Lady of America and giving out Her medal) ...However, in spite of everything, we do feel that God is with us and since too, our father St. Joseph is our provider, we know that we will be well taken care of. Speaking of good St. Joseph, – before we had his statue, some lilies we had planted, but which never bloomed did so for the first time when we placed our dear father on his pedestal and they have been blooming ever since. Please don't worry about my health, though I am indeed grateful for your solicitude in my regard, Bishop. The aches and pains I have now and then are merely signs of the gradual be oncoming of old age, and since I will forever be young in spirit, who cares about all the sidelines? Just to relieve you of your concern about my somewhat plump appearance, let me tell you simply that I'm sure this condition is the result of drinking a lot of soft drinks, especially coke. A friend of ours has been supplying us with these cold drinks and since the weather has been rather on the hot side, well, we've been making good use of his gift. But since we have come to realize that these drinks are really not good for a person we decided to stop. Fruit juices are much better, in fact there is really no comparison. We get out into the fresh air as much as possible, Sister Florecita insists on this. We also go out every evening unless something unforeseen happens. But this doesn't often occur. Bishop, we are deeply grateful to you for offering to get the English breviary for us, but it so happened that Sister Florecita obtained it for us this past Christmas, the two volumes that is, the third has not yet arrived. Though our other Breviaries were practically new yet Sister did not feel it would be against poverty to get the English-Latin Breviary as this, she felt, would be a great help to us in our knowledge of what we were praying or singing and so would enable us to give greater glory to God. Also, Sister felt that the vernacular would make it easier for us to meditate on the psalms and lessons. Thanks again for your kind thoughtfulness and generosity, Bishop. We very much appreciate it. We have our own little apostolate here, Bishop. It would surprise you, or maybe it wouldn't, how many people come here to us to pour out their troubles, to ask for advice and prayers. They do not go to the teachers, but to us. So – we give them our time generously because we know that through us poor instruments God is doing a great work in these souls and also to those who cannot come or will not. Yesterday afternoon when I went to answer the phone here, it was a poor lady calling from Cleveland. She had heard about our Cloister, so she called, begging for our prayers. She told me her whole story over the phone; it was surely a sad story. Her husband unfaithful to her, running around with other women, etc. She pleaded for help. I told her that we would pray for her and medals and leaflets of Our Lady of America would be sent to her. This poor lady then said how much better she felt because of the few words of comfort I tried to give her and promised to trust more in goodness and mercy of God. Today another lady called asking if she could come over to discuss her troubles and ask for prayers. After our little talk she went away from her visit, consoled and encouraged. She was most grateful and happy to take along Our Lady of America medals and leaflets. She was deeply interested and will most surely be an excellent promoter for the cause. Both these good souls promised to keep in contact with us. How wonderful are the ways of God! The above are just a few examples of the hidden apostolate we are trying to carry on very quietly, for God works in such dark and obscure ways, for the most part,

that the unobservant will never notice the imprint of His fingers on the human heart. We have left the world almost completely, yet souls struggling and suffering in the world come to us for prayer or for a word of comfort and encouragement. Strange though it may seem, we here in the Cloister have come very close to the people. They seem to be a very part of us. Sister Florecita feels it should be this way. We are completely dedicated to the apostolate of prayer, but when the people for whom we are praying come to us for help, we try to give it fully. your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem God bless you, Bishop! Pray for P.S. 1 Thanks so much for sending copies of both talks. We think they are excellent. We of course are partial to the one on the Cloistered life. We love it. P.S. 2) We are still saying all the Office in Latin but according to your advice – Sr. Florecita is going to ask Bishop Rehring for permission to say the non singing parts in the vernacular in the near future. We were so happy to hear that you are using the vernacular.

July 27, 1964 (A lady from Cincinnati requested leaflets and medals to distribute and make Our Lady of America known. The Sisters make clear all medals and leaflets are free. Donations will be used for more leaflets and medals. The lady wishes to know more, and without wanting to disturb the authorities, Sister asks Archbishop Leibold to write some explanation for the devotion) ...Today we received a letter from a lady in Cincinnati requesting leaflets and medals of Our Lady of America. She sent a donation for 35 medals but Sister Florecita told me to send her 50 since this good person wants to be a promoter of this apostolate. She is very much interested in it. You know of course, Bishop, that we are not asking anything for the medals or leaflets. If anyone wishes to send in a donation anyway, well it's all right as we will use this money to save up to have more medals made and leaflets printed, but we make it a point to tell them that the medals, etc., are given gratis and no donation is requested or even hinted at. This certain individual whom I've just been writing about, also would like to have leaflets explaining the origin of this movement. This is where you come in, Bishop. Please, will you write out some explanation, enough to satisfy those who desire to know more, without getting this poor Cloister in the black book with the higher ups? I would appreciate this so much, Bishop. You know what it means to me. I'll enclose the letter this lady wrote to us so you can read it over for yourself. I would like to have it back, however, as we are keeping all such letters in our files.

Aug. 29, 1964 (SME acknowledges how Reverend Mother is against the Cloister. A number of young sisters, approved and recommended by their Superiors are anxious in joining. From these, the Cloister sisters learn of the Reverend Mother's attitude, as she discourages anyone wishing to join the Cloister, except those sisters the Reverend Mother does not know what to do with. Msgr. Wegner of Boy's Town requests medals of Our Lady of America) ...Incidentally, we've heard from more than one quarter how much our Rev. Mother is against us. There are a number of young Sisters anxious to join us. These Sisters have been well approved and recommended by their individual Superiors. They would not be the kind to make up stories. It was from these also we learned of Rev. Mother's attitude towards us. She discourages anyone who wishes to join us, except those she doesn't seem to know what to do with or those she can easily dispense with. To one of the young Sisters she made a direct remark that not even the Archbishop approved of the Cloister. This cut us to the core, Bishop as we know it was His Grace who spoke up for the Cloister at the General Chapter. It was because of His stand that the Cloister was voted on favorably and was able to begin. What are we to think now? It is a deep hurt. We do not know what to make of it all. I thought you would be interested in the enclosed letters. Please return whenever you finish with them. No hurry. Also received a short note of thanks from Msgr. Wegner of Boy's Town. I sent him fifty medals and leaflets along with a few lines telling him he could have more if he wished. Our Lady was most (interested) in the young. I should say is. God bless you Bishop! Pray always for Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

Sept. 2, 1964 (Silence, solitude and strict enclosure are the way for the Cloister sisters in the midst of serious trial. Mother General, without consulting the Council, seeks to make the Cloister an active part of the Order. The Cloister Sisters are willing to take their mission for Our Lady elsewhere if need be. The appeal to the help of Archbishop Leibold and Bishop Isenmann) ...Father, I've had the chance to speak to Sister Florecita during this

retreat. I'm with her all the way, Father. Silence, solitude and strict enclosure. We are determined to go all the way. It has to be, Father. Half-measures would never do. The situation in the Community right now, Father is very serious. It seems that the Mother General has taken it upon herself to go ahead in certain matters without consulting the Council. I don't intend in any way to judge her or anyone else, as I believe she thinks it's alright for her to do as she is doing. I'm afraid matters will not go too well especially around election time. What Sister and I are most worried about Father is that Rev. Mother, being such an active person, will make the cloister more active than contemplative. She has as much as said so. Sister Florecita will tell you more about it. Now you know, Father, this cannot be. If it's going to be that way, then we might as well not have it at all. If it should come to that, Father, Sister and I decided we would have to go and start elsewhere. We are hoping and praying that you, Father, and Bishop Issenmann, may perhaps clear the situation a bit for us. Right now, the outlook seems quite cloudy. Could the Archbishop's help be solicited?

Sept. 20, 1964 (The Sisters say, "...if it wouldn't be for your generosity (Bishop Leibold) in sending these Stipends we really would have been in a fix many a time. It is mainly because of you that we have been able to have a High Mass every day.") Dear Bishop, Thank you so much for your Anniversary greetings and gift, but especially the prayers. How good of you Bishop to remember me this way each year. I can never thank you enough. Also, special gratitude from all of us for the Mass Stipends. Sister Florecita was just saying the other day that if it wouldn't be for your generosity in sending these Stipends we really would have been in a fix many a time. It is mainly because of you that we have been able to have a High Mass every day. We owe you much and I owe you more than I can ever repay. Bishop Rehring "dropped" in about the week before leaving for his trip to Rome. He mentioned, on the side, that you had to stay home. I know there are scores of people who are glad that you are staying home, including a little scrub sister at New Riegel. Since I'm sure you don't enjoy galivantin' around either, your staying at home gives you more contentment and satisfaction than the other could.

Oct. 11, 1964 (a sister longing to enter the Cloister is sent to Arizona, with a task of which she knows nothing about) ...One of the Sisters, who was supposed to and should have entered here this past summer, received an assignment to teach music in Phoenix, Arizona, I suppose to get her as far away from the Cloister as possible. Anyway, since the place where this Sister is now stationed has more than enough music teachers, this good Sister was left practically in the air until the Superior wrote to the Motherhouse for advice regarding her. Well, after some more confusion the dear Sister ended up as Librarian and is trying to teach library science of which she knows practically nothing, on her own admission, (Sister wrote to Sister Florecita and told her all about her experiences). Sister longs to enter here and has been highly thought of by her Superiors.

Oct. 28, 1964 (Bishop Issenmann receives a new position while Bishop Leibold will remain for now. Sister prays for his possible change and expresses that she'd be stranded if she could not reach him. She also expresses sympathy for the loss of another of Bishop Leibold's sisters) ...I am glad for Bishop Issenmann. He will have a much wider scope for his abilities. I'm sure he will do well in his new position. You don't know how relieved I was to know that you will remain, at least for a while, in your old position. Of course I do hope you will soon have your own diocese that is, Cincinnati or Toledo, when the time comes. But till then, I'll pray that you remain where you are. I mentioned Cin. & Toledo because I'd be stranded if you would land somewhere where I couldn't reach you. I am sorry to hear that you lost another Sister. Well, maybe if we all have patience, times will soon be better. It is so much harder to be tried by the Good than the Evil. So glad you took care of the medals.

Jan. 18, 1965 (The Cloister sisters witness an awful reaction by the Reverend Mother when asked about obtaining new members, telling the sisters that neither could any be spared nor do any want to enter the Cloister. However, the Cloister is receiving mail from young professed sisters with great desires to enter. Permission was granted to Sister Florecita to seek members from other Congregations. The Cloister sisters continue to work tirelessly and assist visitors, while feeling their endurance having reached its limit. Discouragement is setting in after ten years. SME seeks Archbishop Leibold's help for the survival of the Cloister)...Rev. Mother Aquinas was here a few

weeks before Christmas. While she was here Sister Florecita asked Rev. Mother about the possibility of obtaining new members for the Cloister. Instantly Mother's face hardened with an awful expression. I was present personally and I saw Mother's reaction. She simply stated that she could not spare any Sisters for the Cloister and that was that. Rev. Mother does not intend to give us any new members, which means that for the next few years no one will enter the Cloister. Perhaps the next new Mother General will not have any more interest in the Cloister than the present one, which means that our cause is lost. Rev. Mother made the statement that no one wants to enter the Cloister. We know differently as young professed Sisters, several of whom have been highly recommended by their Superiors, are writing to us constantly telling us of their great desire to enter. Anyway, when Sister Florecita realized it was simply useless to discuss the matter of candidates from our Community for the Cloister, she ventured to ask Rev. Mother about the possibility of accepting members from other Congregations who are interested in the contemplative way of life and who are taking steps for a transfer to some Cloister. Mother immediately favored the idea and gave Sister Florecita the necessary permission to do what she can to obtain members from other Congregations. Sister asked Mother if she would put her signature to a letter of introduction to Mother Generals regarding this matter. Rev. Mother acquiesced, so Sister Florecita went to the typewriter immediately and typed out a letter using the Mother house letter head. After reading it over Mother Aquinas signed the letter without further comment and the matter ended there. The problem was not discussed after that. The next day Sister had offset copies made of the original letter and I am sending you a number of these copies along with this letter. Now Bishop, what are we to do, and how are we to proceed? We are completely unacquainted with Mother Generals, besides, it is Sister's fear that our poor efforts in this line will not bring results. Several years ago when Father Linnenberger, C.P.P.S. was here he told Sister that a Trappistine Community in the East had recruited members in this fashion. As a matter of fact the Trappistines received around 200 requests for admission to their Abby. Of course only a very few were accepted and these were carefully screened. We are quite discouraged, as our work is growing in leaps and bounds. People from all over are coming to us and I will say we do feel very close to them, however, there is a limit to human endurance and I feel that we have reached that limit. I personally feel that the best thing that could happen is to obtain a few members, from other Congregations. It would help to awaken the Community to reality, that something must be done if the Cloister is to survive. I wonder sometimes if the Community is really interested Bishop, how are we to go about this business of getting recruits from outside the Community? Is there anything you can do to help us in this matter? We realize that permission will have to come from Rome for the transfer, but certainly that will not be the big problem, rather how to find some one interested and one that really has the qualifications necessary for our way of life. This is no child's play in the Cloister. It does take mature women who wholly are dedicated, otherwise they simply will not persevere. They will have to forget themselves when they come in and be willing to live a life of pure faith since they will not see results as the active Sisters do. There is no glamor here of any kind. Just a hum drum work and pray, and pray and work, day in and day out..... Let us know what you think about it, Bishop, as we do not intend to do anything until we hear from you, besides we have absolutely no weight here with Mother Generals, including our own. You probably can do more than all of us put together. We are hard pressed Bishop, and we can see that Sister Florecita is losing ground physically. She doesn't have the health, yet the dream is hers, not ours, and I doubt very much if anyone else will be able to carry the project through at this early stage. Please dear Bishop help us! As I mentioned above, we are really getting discouraged. It will soon be ten years that we started and here we are exactly where we began. One thing I forgot to mention. Sister Florecita feels that it is very important that the novitiate be here. Father Linenberger probably will be able to take care of that. Sister has already discussed it with him. God bless you, Bishop! May the Holy Spirit enlighten and guide you in a special way in our behalf. We are immensely grateful to you, Bishop, for all your care and solicitude in our regard. Our prayers are with you always. Gratefully in Our Lady, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister Mary Ephrem

Jan 27, 1965 (Archbishop Leibold sends a list of Mother Generals from other Orders with a letter from himself to seek new members to the Cloister. An unexpected benefactor donates needed funds to acquire an adjacent

property, and the strong winds sent by God knock down a wall between, allowing for use of the blocks for a new wall on the newly acquired property) Dear Bishop, Thank you so much for your prompt reply to my letter. We read the letter over carefully several times and we are particularly grateful for the letter you enclosed for the Mother Generals. We intend to act immediately by sending out letters to the Mother Generals whose addresses you sent us. We are hoping we will get some kind of response. We will keep you informed regarding the outcome. In the meantime we will place the entire project in the hands of Our Lady and her Divine Son. Incidentally, this is not the long letter I promised you. That will be forthcoming as soon as I get a little more headway on the weaving. Right now I am snowed under. However, before closing I wish to talk to you about a strange, strange thing that happened this week. A couple weeks ago, with Rev. Mother's permission, Sister Florecita purchased about seven eighths of an acre of land on the west side of our wall. Sister had been trying to buy this for the last four years, but did not succeed till now. About an hour after the deal was made, an unexpected benefactor turned up who gave Sister the money for the above mentioned purchase. Then, this week, it seems that the Lord decided to give us a lift too. We had been wondering what to do about the wall between our land and that which we had just recently acquired. It would have been an enormous expense to remove it, far beyond our means. So we had decided to have just a small opening or door made into the wall leading into the new part. This last Tuesday the Lord pushed the wall down Himself using a strong wind as His instrument. We've had many strong winds, worse even than this one, but never the kind that could lift a wall 300 ft. long, ten ft. high of cement blocks. And the kind wind so arranged the blocks that, outside of a few, we can use all of them for the walls needed for the newly acquired land. So now the masons are ready and waiting for the weather to warm up again before starting to lay the blocks for the new wall. We're astonished at the turn of events. Certainly now more than ever we feel that the Lord is with us. God bless you, Bishop! Your very, small daughter Sister M. Ephrem

Feb. 16, 1965 (Archbishop Leibold's Aunt Helen continues to support the Sisters, taking to Florida one hundred medals and leaflets on Our Lady of America, as does another friend and a Notre Dame Sister. Additional requests for medals and leaflets came from the Cloistered Poor Clares. A known sister leaves the religious life, and SME expresses a cause for the problem of many religious, "*We are so caught up in works that we forget to love. We no longer have time for it...*" Replies to recent letters asking Mother Generals of other Orders for candidates come in the same. The Cloister concludes that this will never be brought to the attention of the subjects, and so ask Archbishop Leibold for approval to write an article to make their need known) Dear Bishop, I had every intention of writing this letter Feb. 11th, but as usual I did not make it. Before your Aunt Helen went to Florida this past Christmas, she visited Sister Florecita. During the conversation Sister mentioned to your Aunt about doing a bit of apostolic work while she was enjoying her vacation. So it ended with your Aunt taking along one hundred medals and leaflets of Our Lady of America. She was most enthusiastic about spreading the devotion. Since then, another of Sister's friends asked for one hundred medals, also. So you see, Bishop, Our Lady is quite busy here and she has a most zealous promoter in Sister Florecita. Rather recently, a Notre Dame Sister from Mt. Notre Dame in Reading, Cin. wrote asking for a hundred medals and leaflets, too. She would have purchased something different than aluminum but I wrote telling her these were the only kind we had a present. However, as this Sister hinted at getting more medals in the future, I assured her that we would take up the matter with you. in the near future. This Sister is not the only one to come to us with this request. I leave it all up to you, Bishop. Whatever you do will be perfectly all right with me. What the medals are made of doesn't make a bit of difference to me, of course. By the way, Bishop, do you have any medals on hand? We'll be needing more soon as they have been going out at a fast rate, especially this past year. Oh yes, I mustn't forget to tell you that the Cloistered Poor Clares from Indiana also wrote, it was in January I believe, requesting 200 medals and leaflets. The letter hinted also about requesting more medals later on. These Sisters seem most anxious to further Our Lady's cause, and that of course always gives us great joy. I was very much saddened at hearing of the departure of Sister Alicene. I always did think a great deal of her – and still do. She is a very fine person. It could be however, that she is not fitted by temperament for the religious life. It is sometimes difficult to ascertain the real cause of the trouble or problem. Sister is not the only one out in this manner, there are more as you probably know. It must be very hard for them

to be in such a state of uncertainty and insecurity. They do need our prayers. I am very glad that you are directing Sister A. This way I know that all will come out for the best in her regard. She couldn't have a better guide. *I sometimes wonder if all the ceaseless activity in which we are almost smothered, to say the least, is not one of the main causes for the unrest and confusion that troubles so many souls especially in the religious life. We are so caught up in works that we forget to love. We no longer have time for it. Emptying our hearts on the fields of action we leave them empty because we are too busy to notice our own need. This is a tragedy. The good intention, the generous motive is no substitute for love. We may have loads of these and yet love very little. Only deep, interior dedication to the love of God, full and complete, can make apostolic works fruitful. We know all this and yet how easy it is to forget when we are in the midst of so much activism.* God bless you, dear Bishop! Let us pray for one another that we may grow in love with every passing moment. Gratefully, Your very, small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

P.S. Bishop, you must be wondering about the letters we sent to the Mother Generals. We have received replies from several and more or less all the answers amount to the same thing, that is, "we know of no prospects in view." So, Bishop, we're beginning to realize that all Mother Generals probably see eye to eye when it comes to permitting subjects to transfer to a Cloister. The fact that our Cloister is open to receive candidates from other Orders will never be brought to the attention of the subjects. We are wondering what you think about our writing an article about our work with a couple of pictures for the Telegraph and Chronicle. At the end of the article we could very casually bring in that we accept candidates from other Orders. Let us know what you think about this idea. Summer will be here before we realize it and we are hoping that during the summer session we will receive at least one or two candidates. We will send the article straight to you for correction, if this idea meets with your approval. S.M.E.

April 27, 1965 (Rome approves the Cloister Statutes. The Cloister awaits the next move from the Motherhouse) ...By the way, we received word that the Cloister Statutes have been approved. The papers were sent to Rev. Mother about two weeks ago but we, as yet, have had no information from the Motherhouse concerning either the papers or the approval.

May 18, 1965 (Msgr. Graham offers to submit articles on the Cloister in the Telegraph, which the Sisters begin to do with Archbishop Leibold's advice, seeking new members. With the support of Fr. Linenberger, CPPS, the Cloistered Sisters go through the approved papers from the Vatican, yet feel like three abandoned orphans, receiving still no word from the Motherhouse and the Bishop. The Community should be proud of this singular honor, yet all attention is on the activities in South America. SME expresses concern that letters are not all being sent from or received by the Cloister) Dear Bishop, Sometime ago Msgr. Graham wrote telling me that anytime we had an article about the Cloister for him he would be very happy to put it in the Telegraph. We put together a small write-up which I am sending along to you with several photos. We would be very happy if you would go through it and eliminate anything you consider imprudent, then send it on to Msgr. Graham for us. I have a personal letter for him which I want you to read, before sending the material to him. Since we did not receive much of any response from the Mother General after sending them copies of Mother Aquinas' letter along with a personal typed letter by Sister Florecita, we feel that perhaps the only way we are able to acquaint the Sisters about the fact that we are open to receiving members from other Communities is to advertise it in the paper. Probably all the Mother Generals are holding on tight to every one of their members and they are not too anxious for the news to get around that our Cloister is ready to accept a few good, solid members. It is over a month now since we were given the news, through good Father Linenberger, of the approval of our Cloister Statutes. We had a very nice visit with him a couple weeks ago. He generously gave us about three hours of his time which we appreciated very much. Before he left for Europe he wrote another letter to us with the information that he had stopped at Regina Heights and asked to see the approved Cloister Statutes. They were there and in order as he expected. He went over them minutely. But there has not been one single word from the Motherhouse concerning this precious packet from Rome even though Sister Florecita wrote asking for two copies of the approved statutes,

one to send to Bishop Rehring, the other to keep for our files. So we really feel like three abandoned orphans. You can imagine how deeply this neglect hurts us. All interests now seemed to be for South America. That is all very good, certainly, but after all, justice is justice. One would think that the Community would be proud that the Cloister Statutes have been approved. Certainly it is a singular honor bestowed upon it. But by, or rather judging by, the treatment that is being meted out to us we cannot help sadly wondering. About those two letters I wrote to you and didn't reach you, I am not surprised in a way. We have been having trouble since there were some changes in the Post Office. We did not receive some letters ourselves which certain friends wrote and send to us and who complained that they received no answer. But I hope it won't happen again, because though my poor letters may not be very important I wouldn't want to be writing them for nothing. Sister Florecita asked me to write to Msgr. Graham because she knows that he is one my good friends from the Cathedral, from the Chancery too, by the way. Well, Bishop, I perceive that I have been long-winded again so I had better terminate this now. God bless you and Our Lady enfold you in her smile. Pray for us all and our beloved Cloister (I need most of the prayers though). Thank you so much! Always, Bishop, Your very small daughter in Jesus, Sister M. Ephrem

July 13, 1965 (Archbishop Leibold visits the Cloister again, offering the High Mass with two Priests) Dear Bishop, Oh how much we enjoyed your visit! It was so wonderful to see you again, Bishop! Your sympathy, understanding and exceptional kindness mean so very much to us. We know that we can always approach you with any problem that may come our way, confident that your wise and prudent counsel will always direct us aright. We thank God daily for our staunch and ever faithful friend and guide, Bishop Leibold. In spite of the fact that we were not as prepared for your visit as we had hoped to be, although we had been getting ready for your visit as far as we were able under the circumstances, everything went real well and we did notice that you seemed much more relaxed than you were last summer. So we concluded that you must have enjoyed, really enjoyed your so recent visit with us. For all of us, Bishop, it was a red – letter day, one that we will never be able to forget. It did all of us so much good we just can't help recalling the happy, wonderful time we enjoyed in your company, Bishop. We hope that you enjoyed it as much, your visit to your Cloistered Sisters. Thank you for the High Mass. We hope that our singing wasn't too bad. We didn't have too much time to practice. Well, assisting at your Mass made up for everything. We deeply appreciated it, Bishop. Also, thank you for bringing along those two fine priests. We feel that they enjoyed the visit too. Our special gratitude for the Mass Stipends, also for the magazine and book. We've heard about this book and so are anxious to read it. We all read the article on Our Lady written by our own loved Bishop Leibold and think it exceptionally good as well as enlightening. We are looking forward to more of the same. Bishop, you have a standing invitation to pay us a visit every summer. Bring along anyone you wish. Please, Bishop, don't let us down on this. It means so very much to all of us. You are our true friend, one upon whom we can always rely. God bless you, dear Bishop! Please keep us all and our and your Cloister always in your prayers. We keep you in ours, be assured Your grateful Cloistered Sisters, Sister M. Ephrem

Nov. 3, 1965 (An older sister, Novice Mistress, leaves the Cloister. Reverend Mother sends her to the active Sisters on the lower floor of the building, and appoints Sister Florecita, founder of the Cloister, to be Novice Mistress. Sister Florecita insists Sister Mary Ephrem give the instructions to novices and professed Sisters, she asks the Bishop's prayers and says, "*The Holy Spirit is the only one who can reach and touch souls. Without Him all effort is in vain.*") ...The real purpose of this letter is to inform you that we lost one of our members, the Novice Mistress. You no doubt remember her from Regina Heights as she was Novice Mistress there for a number of years. Sisters entrance here into the Cloister was, of course, a sad mistake. Sister Florecita, as well as the rest of us, did not feel that any of us three would be able to take care of the Novitiate at the time of it's establishment. There were so many things to consider and so many things still to be done, we did not feel we could do justice to it. Besides this, since Sister had been Novice Mistress before, Sister Florecita as well as the other two of us felt she could at least get our Novitiate off to a good start even though Sister would not be able to hold the Office long as she is past seventy, in fact around seventy-five years old. We did not realize that Sister A. would be so set in her way of looking at things, so determined on the old way of doing things to the exclusion of change and progress

in any form. Then, worst of all, we realized too late, that Sister was in no way a contemplative. She had no true understanding of the contemplative life or of the particular spirit that should prevail here in the Cloister. So there loomed up the danger, the great danger of a division in the Cloister, two spirits – where there should be and must be only one. This, as you can well see, Bishop, would have created, havoc, chaos. Then too, Sister A. would sleep almost the whole of the meditation hour, even snoring during the course of it. This, of course, would start the postulants giggling just about the whole time. Sister Florecita was in a dilemma as she could not say or do anything for fear of antagonizing Sister A. and so make things worse. So there was only one course for Sister to take and that was to write to Rev. Mother and inform her of the situation, which she did. The result was that Rev. Mother came yesterday and made the change. Sister A. was removed as Novice Mistress and is now residing with the Sisters downstairs, the teachers where she will have plenty to do so she won't feel put "on the shelf." Certainly there was nothing of a personal nature against Sister in all this. She is a very, good Religious and prayerful. We appreciated all this in her but the common good was at stake so we had no choice. We wanted to be the first to tell you about what happened before you received it via the grape-vine. Rev. Mother told Sister Florecita to take charge of the Novitiate herself now because after-all, as Mother said, she, Sister has the true spirit of this Cloister being the one who founded it and so could impart this spirit so much better than anyone else. However, Sister Florecita has insisted that I give the instructions, also to the Professed. Sister claims I am much better at it than she is, although she is so good at it I don't know who could be better. But since it is Sister's wish that I do this, Bishop, I beg your prayers. *The Holy Spirit is the only one who can reach and touch souls. Without Him all effort is in vain.*

Nov. 27, 1965 (The Cloister receives two postulants, Sister William Marie and Sister Joseph Therese. SME gives instructions on the Divine Indwelling Trinity) Dear Bishop, At last we managed to get your cards off to you. We've really been working on them all this while but you know how it goes around here. I'm sure you are acquainted, well acquainted with our busy, busy life of work and prayer. We deeply appreciated your last letter of praise and encouragement. The two postulants were especially grateful to you for your fatherly interest and remembrance at Mass on their special day, Bishop. You recall, Bishop, my telling you in one of my recent letters to you, about the instructions I was asked to give. Of course I spoke on my favorite subject, namely, the Divine Indwelling Trinity. A day or so later one of the postulants came out with the enclosed thoughts and prayers on the Divine Presence. Sister Florecita and I both felt you should have a copy as we were very happy about the incident and knew that you would be also, Bishop, if not more so.

March 9, 1966 (A Sister from the Community, not the Cloister, wishes to promote Our Lady of America by a poem she wrote. SME seeks Archbishop Leibold's advice as the devotion has not been approved by the local Bishop) ...Talking about Sister M. Linus, I've been confronted with a problem, Bishop. Sister wrote to me recently concerning a poem she had written bearing the title, "Our Lady of America". Sister has asked me my opinion concerning it. I would like your advice Bishop. Do you think it prudent for such a song to be sung or taught at this time before His Grace receives the manuscript? Will it be thought that we were pushing the cause before approval was given? I have never told Sister M. Linus anything that would have given her any ideas about me or the message. I think the poem very good and quite appropriate but wondered if I should advise Sister to wait until she visits here and perhaps do a little explaining. What do you think Bishop? I've enclosed her letter, also the poem. When you are through with them will you kindly return them to me. Thank you so much for your trouble.

(Many Letters from this point disappear. Sister Mary Ephrem, C.P.P.S. returned to the use of her Baptismal and legal name, Sister Mildred Marie Neuzil, C.P.P.S. Archbishop Leibold died in 1972. Sister Florecita also died. About this same time, the Cloister was closed, and the remaining sisters were offered to either join the active congregation or leave the Order. Trials multiplied and Sister Mary Ephrem, Mildred Marie Neuzil, lived out her life in privacy, promoting Our Lady of America and Her Mission, while remaining in good standings with the Order. There are many letters to corroborate various later events.)