

Starting with a review of salvation history, the four Mysteries of the Rosary are examined and linked to God's plan for man as shown in the Bible. The protective power of the Rosary and prayer are examined.

God's Love Story: The Rosary As Protection

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The Rosary As Protection**

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the_copper_puppy@yahoo.com

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Michael J. Laurence

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	vii
God’s Plan for His Family	1
A Whole New World	6
After the Fall, a Flood.....	8
From the Righteous Abraham to Moses	11
From Moses, the Deliverer, to the Real Deliverer	15
The Power of 7.....	18
The Seven Sacraments of the Church	19
God’s Battle Plan	22
The Joyful Mysteries.....	25
The Annunciation.....	25
II. Visitation of Mary to Her Cousin Elizabeth.....	29
III. The Nativity	31
IV: The Presentation at the Temple	35
V: The Finding in the Temple.....	38
Summary of the Joyful Mysteries	40
The Luminous Mysteries	41
I. Baptism in the Jordan.....	41
II. The Wedding at Cana.....	44
III. The Proclamation of the Kingdom.....	46
IV. The Transfiguration	58
V. The Eucharist	60
Summary of the Luminous Mysteries.....	64
Sorrowful Mysteries.....	66
I. The Agony in the Garden.....	66
II. The Scourging.....	68
III. The Crowning with Thorns.....	69
IV. The Carrying of the Cross.....	70
V. The Crucifixion.....	71
Debunking Conspiracy Theories.....	78
Summary of the Sorrowful Mysteries.....	81
The Glorious Mysteries.....	82
I. The Resurrection.....	82

Michael J. Laurence

II. The Ascension of Jesus	93
III. The Descent of the Holy Spirit	95
IV: The Assumption of Mary.....	99
V. Mary, Queen of Heaven.....	100
Summary of the Glorious Mysteries.....	102
Conclusion	103
Man is Inherently Weak.....	106
Bear One Another's Burdens.....	107
Don't Create Burdens	111
Jesus and Prayer.....	113
Jesus Granting Prayers.....	118
The Power of Prayer	121
Sometimes the Answer is NO	122
Prayer of St. Francis.....	124
The Serenity Prayer.....	124
Prayer of an unknown Civil War soldier	125
Appendix One	127
The 15 promises of the Virgin Mary to those who recite the Rosary.	127
Praying the Traditional Rosary	129
The Apostle's Creed (Original Version)	131
Our Father	131
Hail Mary	131
Glory Be.....	131
O My Jesus.....	132
Hail, Holy Queen	132
Protestant Rosary and the Hail Mary	133
Other Rosaries.....	134
The Gospel of Judas.....	135

God's Plan for His Family

The Bible does speak to us of the one, true God. In ancient times, many believed the lie that there were many gods who were basically bigger, immortal versions of ourselves, as flawed as any man. Today, atheists and agnostics are praised by some misguided individuals who want to be “fair” and “tolerant” as being more logical than Christians. Something—and the universe most definitely *is* something—does not come logically from nothing. The best explanation of what *is*, is the Bible.

What the Bible tells us is that one God exists in fellowship: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God created the heavens and the earth, and if we look at what the Bible tells us, it is that God is building a *home* for us. In the beginning, there is no time (God is eternal, which is why it's illogical to speak of His beginning—He has no beginning and no end). God decides in Genesis 1 that He will create the heavens and the earth. The excellent analysis comes from Scott Hahn's *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*.

On Day One, He creates Time by creating Day and Night. On Day Two, He creates Space, with both Sea and Sky. On Day Three, He creates Life in the form of Land and Vegetation. On top of that foundation we have Day Four in which God creates the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. Day Five is the creation by God of Birds and Fish to fill the Sea and Sky. On Day Six, God created Man and Animals. The Seventh Day is the Sabbath.

He placed Adam in Eden first and gave him a job. “And the Lord God took man, and put him into the paradise of pleasure, to dress it, and to keep it” (Gen. 2:15). At first Adam dwelt in Paradise, but unlike the animals, he had no companion. God said "And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself" (Gen. 2:18). This is the only time in the Genesis account that God does not say that something He did is good as is. It is incomplete. However, He tells us that He had the various animals He had created come to Adam and Adam named them, but among all of the animals that God had created, not one was suitable as a companion for Adam. Thus Eve was created from man's rib to be his companion.

Michael J. Laurence

And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh. And they were both naked: to wit, Adam and his wife: and were not ashamed. (Gen 2:23-25)

So we see that God has created husband and wife and they are to become one. This is the first of God's covenant promises to man: marriage. Note how He works through us to help each of us. A husband and wife should be each other's strength.

It is also the first step in the creation of *family*. God designed man to be interdependent, one with another. We continue by virtue of children. Good parents imitate what God does in caring for us: they want to raise healthy, moral adults. God uses various methods to develop our mental and moral capabilities so we can know and serve Him through helping our fellow man, whether direct family or not. That would be difficult under the best of circumstances, but given the nature of the fallen world where Satan and his minions are active, it becomes more challenging, which is why God gave us instructions on how to defeat the enemy and achieve our goals of a good life for us and our family and a great life with God for eternity.

It's also important to stop and recognize the significance of the term *covenant* when considering promises the Lord makes. It's not merely a contract. As Scott Hahn points out in *Rome Sweet Home*, in Scripture a contract is about the exchange of property. A covenant is about the bonds people exchange. "Covenant kinship was stronger than biological kinship" Hahn says (30). God fathers Israel as His family, Hahn notes. Later we see that is not a matter of mere preference to the exclusion of others, but that Israel's role in God's plan was to be a priestly nation that would lead others to God. But we must return to where it started, with Adam and Eve in the Garden.

They were placed in the Garden of Eden where God walked and talked with them Genesis 3:8. They had been told not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam had been told to till the soil (work) and "keep" the Garden, and as Hahn notes, that command implied protect

God's Love Story: The Rosary as Protection

it. The Serpent entered the Garden and confronted both Adam and Eve. Adam stands silent while the Serpent asks Eve if God said that they may not eat the fruit of the trees and she says they may, but not of the one particular one because they would die. The Serpent asserts that this is not true: they will not die. Hahn notes that the Serpent's assertion is one where the sentence is not completed; there is an implication that they will not die from eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but perhaps, if they don't, the Serpent may kill them.

Adam continues to remain silent, though he should not have allowed the Serpent to address his wife. He should not have allowed God's goodness to be challenged. He should not have let the Serpent remain in the Garden. Eve looks upon the fruit and hears that the Serpent says if they eat of it that they will become like God, knowing good and evil. She is seduced by the lie and takes the fruit and eats it and hands it to Adam to eat as well. Once she had disobeyed God, the die was cast. Adam also eats the fruit and they find that the Serpent did not lie in that they do not *physically* die immediately and they do now see good and evil. They experience a spiritual death of innocence. They realize they are naked and go to make "clothing" for themselves. When they hear God walking in the Garden, they hide from Him, for they are naked. Then and now, we can not hide from God.

And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: Where art thou? And he said: I heard thy voice in paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And he said to him: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And Adam said: The woman, whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the woman: Why hast thou done this? And she answered: The serpent deceived me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. (Gen 3:9-14)

Note how God calls first to Adam, because Adam is to look out for the Garden and Eve. (The Serpent, of course, violated the natural order and decided that Eve was the weaker of the two, yet it is Eve who at least tries to defeat the Serpent's argument.) Adam tells God why he's hiding—he's naked. God, who knew already what had happened, says that Adam has eaten of the forbidden fruit, which is how he knew they were naked. They have disobeyed Him, yet God asks Eve why she did this and she says the Serpent tricked her.

What Adam and Eve said was true, but it is really incomplete. Just as neither called upon God for help in their time of distress when confronted by the Serpent, so neither apologizes to God for their disobedience. In fact, it sounds like Adam points the finger of blame at Eve and she at the Serpent instead of either one taking responsibility for their own bad choices. They followed that folly up with trying, literally, to cover up their crime. Though I can not prove it, I have always suspected that even if they had given in and eaten the fruit, but then called upon God for mercy, things might have been a bit less harsh for them. They would have been out of the Garden, of course. God can't abide in the presence of sin, but life is quite hard in the fallen world and part of the reason for that is we have to learn to depend on God.

God then turns to the Serpent and without asking him anything, because God knows all including the nature and intent of the Serpent, He curses him. It is interesting to note how the Lord says the Serpent shall crawl on its belly and eat dirt all the days of its life. We only know of serpents as snakes. Apparently the original Serpent may have looked rather different as Hahn says the word used for the Serpent is *nahash* and that term was also used for Leviathan (a dragon like creature) and sea monster and that it definitely means a venomous creature that bites. So instead of being a "little snake," the Serpent may well have been a far more mobile and imposing foe than we likely imagine. Would we, in all honesty, have fared better in the Garden than Adam and Eve? Do we call upon the Lord when we are tempted or in times of trouble, or are we going to handle it ourselves, or distrust God?

As God finishes His curse of the Serpent He says:

God's Love Story: The Rosary as Protection

I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. (Gen. 3:15)

In cursing the Serpent, He also makes another promise: the coming of Jesus (the woman's offspring) who will strike the Serpent's head. Our salvation is promised at the time the Serpent is cursed. Of course, there is still something to be said to the disobedient couple.

To the woman also he said: I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee. And to Adam he said: Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work: with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return. (Gen. 3:16-19)

Frankly, it sounds as though the “negatives” in their lives were to be amplified—Adam already had to till the soil and Eve was to bear children all along. They were also called upon to worship the Lord, but as they sinned, as will their children, they put distance between themselves and the Lord. So that they weren't eternally in sin, the Lord exiled them from the Garden where the Tree of Life was. Now they were in the fallen world. It's also interesting to note that as God had stated all along that man had stewardship over the animals, and that no animal was a suitable companion for Adam, that God dresses Adam and Eve in animal skins (Gen. 3:21). As much as we love animals, God is saying there is a very real difference between man and the beasts. God is also saying that work is not an evil. In fact, Hahn notes that the term used for what Adam was to do in the Garden is what is used in Numbers to describe the duties of the Levite priests in the Tabernacle.

Michael J. Laurence

I think one other thing is worthy of consideration. The number one form of child abuse (and we *are* God's children) is the refusal of a parent to parent and enforce discipline. Even the Garden of Eden had laws and God made them clear to Adam and Eve and then He enforced them. Throughout the Bible, we will see that God is disciplining us to make us worthy to come home to Him and also to make this fallen world a better world than it would be if people did not follow God's laws. We see the mess we're in and though Satan is quite undeniably active in the world, too many are too willing to help him along in his desire to give us hell on earth and hell in eternity by defying God.

A Whole New World

Adam and Eve come to experience one of the greatest horrors that anyone will ever endure: one son (Cain) murders his brother (Abel). If we look at what happened, Cain was a farmer and Abel was effectively a rancher and they both presented burnt offerings to the Lord. Abel's was received with great satisfaction, but the Lord was not so pleased with the first-born's offering. Cain was resentful of this. "And the Lord said to him: Why art thou angry? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it" (Gen. 4:6-7). God was telling Cain that he had the power to control his life: put more effort and humility into it and even though it's a fallen world, he need not be controlled by evil. So what did Cain do? He promptly called his trusting brother Abel into the field and killed him!

The Lord, knowing what happened and why, asks Cain where Abel is. Again, like his parents, he chose not to turn to God for help, nor to take responsibility for his actions and lies to God. "And he answered: I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). Well, yes, we are our brother's keeper. God then tells Cain that for the murder of his brother Abel, he will no longer be able to work that land and he will wander over the earth. Cain can't let it rest; he is incredibly arrogant and informs God that this is too harsh a punishment to bear and that anyone may kill him. God says that will not be: "And the Lord said to him: No, it shall not so be: but

God's Love Story: The Rosary as Protection

whosoever shall kill Cain, shall be punished sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, that whosoever found him should not kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

I think we learn several interesting things here. First, clearly God was still with Adam and Eve and their children and even talked to the sinful. God also offered counsel—He saw that Cain was crestfallen that his offering had not been impressive and told Cain what he needed to do. Cain, prideful individual that he was, chose to simply eliminate the competition rather than put more effort into his tasks. He is rude and arrogant with God—he lies to Him and he questions God's authority ("Am I my brother's keeper?" God clearly felt Cain should know where Abel was, and yes, look out for him.) So God lets Mr. Arrogance wander the earth as he clearly knows best how to solve any problems he encounters.

Cain was married, so he took his wife and they headed out. They had a son they called Enoch in a place Cain named after his son. Eve gave birth to another son, Seth. We have some more "begats" and close Genesis 4 with the information that when Seth was old enough to have a son "But to Seth also was born a son, whom he called Enos: this man began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26). In Genesis 5 we get more information about the length of life of our first ancestors (extremely long) and the many children they had, so yes, Adam and Eve were literally a real couple who started the population of the earth.

We can see that God, who exists in fellowship, created a married couple and gave them children, to create a family. The children obviously didn't all get along, nor listen to God, and so troubles are created by their disobedience. However, God doesn't give up on his plan for families.

I'd also point out that besides having been provided clear rules, man simply was disobedient to God. When called on it, by God, man didn't come clean. Adam and Eve had problems taking responsibility for their bad choices. Cain lied to God. That God didn't strike any of them dead for this and offered them an opportunity to speak up is significant. I think it will also indicate the sense behind the sacrament of Reconciliation—Confession—God will listen to us and if we are truly sorry, He will forgive us. The Bible is filled with accounts of people who sin and are forgiven if they ask it sincerely of God. Jesus forgave sins and He gave the authority to do so to his disciples as well (Mt. 16:18-19; Mt. 18:18).

After the Fall, a Flood

Though all the “begats” can be a bit rough going, what’s important is that Cain’s son Enoch was the father of Methuselah who fathered Lamech who fathered Noah (or Noe in the Douay-Rheims translation). By the time we get to Noah, we see people are just vile.

And all the time that Adam lived, came to nine hundred and thirty years, and he died. Seth also lived a hundred and five years, and begot Enos. And Seth lived after he begot Enos, eight hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died. (Gen. 5:5-8)

This, of course, is when the Great Flood will occur. Noah walked with God, the Bible says, and so God, though His patience was tried, was just and merciful and decided to save Noah and his immediate family so that the family of man would not be eliminated. He instructed Noah to build the ark. He told Noah there would be a great flood and that the rest of the people would be destroyed, even along with the animals that were not in the ark. Noah was obedient. God did flood the earth (and there is good geological evidence of a worldwide flood). When the Flood was over, God told Noah to leave the ark (Genesis 8) and so the family and animals did.

And Noe built an altar unto the Lord: and taking of all cattle and fowls that were clean, offered holocausts upon the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and said: I will no more curse the earth for the sake of man: for the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth: therefore I will no more destroy every living soul as I have done. All the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, shall not cease. (Gen. 8:20-22)

A good deal of the Flood that wipes out creation is like the formation of the world that was described earlier. In Genesis 9, God says He will make a covenant with man, signified by the rainbow, that never again shall He

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