



LIGHT & LIFE

VOICE OF THE ROSARY CENTER & CONFRATERNITY

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HAIL MARY AS FUEL

If I alluded in the previous issue of *Light and Life* that the "Our Father" could be considered as a kind of mission for the salvation of souls, then I don't think it's beyond reason to allegorize the "Hail Mary" as a kind of fuel, or rations, for our mission. The structure of the Rosary lends itself to this analogy, as we begin our focus with our mission. As we pray, we take up our work of constant, rhythmic prayer, ending with the "Glory Be," that is, the final doxology of praise and thanksgiving to God. So let's consider the Hail Mary in three parts.

THE ANGELIC SALUTATION

Hail Mary, full of grace. These are an expansion of the words of the angel from the Gospel of Luke, "Hail, full of grace" (Douay-Rheims version), or "Hail, favored one" (New American Bible), adding Our Lady's name for our prayer. The differing phrasing is, in some way, arguments about wording or parsing, but the idea remains the same. Mary is not *made* "full of grace" or "highly favored" at that moment, but rather, is *found* "full of grace." The angelic greeting is her identity, much as at Lourdes, Mary does not say, "I was conceived immaculately," but "I *am* the Immaculate Conception." The singular grace of her immaculate conception and remaining immaculate, unstained by sin, is her identity and glory, by God's grace. I love that in Spanish, we do not say in the *Hail Mary*, "el Señor esté contigo" ("may the Lord be with you") but instead, "el Señor es contigo" ("the Lord *is* with you"). The use of the indicative rather than the subjunctive in Spanish, reflects the reality at the time the archangel's greeting reached her ears. The use of the verb *ser*, in place of *estar*, reflects that this is not considered a transitory graced state.

Calling her "favored one" reflects the idea that to be graced by God *is* to find favor, or pleasure in God's eyes. Remember that God created us in His image, and once our nature was disfigured by sin, it is *re-created* by Baptism into the image of His Son, the living, incarnate icon of our merciful Father.

We are all made, by adoption, little "sons" or little "christs" in Christ Himself. Mary is the perfect model of that Christ, the New Man, the New Adam, for she was never spiritually wounded by sin. We seek to model *her* in how *she* modeled her Son. We too, then, are made models, although I think in *my* case I am more a model in the definition of "a small or pale imitation of the real thing."

Now, this is *not* the angel glibly throwing out a name or title. By nature, as it bears repeating, angels are *far* above our materially-limited nature. By grace alone we are raised above the angels, and Mary is the most illustrious glory of our race in this, because this greeting of St. Gabriel the Archangel is most high praise. St. Thomas Aquinas reflects on this by saying, "This is as if he said: 'I show thee reverence because thou dost excel me in the fullness of grace.'" (*Catechetical Instructions of St. Thomas*, accessed via ewtn.com). As St. Thomas rightly points out, angels did not go around showing reverence for folks in Scripture. Rather, angels were shown reverence, such as by our father Abraham, for example, in Genesis 18. After all, why not? Angels, by their name and mission, as we reflected on before, are messengers of the Most High God, a kind of ambassador. To show disdain for the ambassador of someone important is often considered to show disdain for the one who *sent* that messenger. That person represents the voice of the one who sent him.



Modonna, Queen of the Rosary
Giovanni Bernardo Azzolino

HUMILITY FIRST AND FOREMOST

In art, it is common to show both the Blessed Virgin Mary *and* the angel showing reverence and humility. Mary recognizes the angel as a messenger of God, but the archangel is shown even more deeply bowed, for she is not only highly-favored, but will become the Ark of the New Covenant, carrying the very God the angel serves. *The Lord is with thee!* The Lord is truly with her by her singularly graced state, and is even more wonderfully made with her in the flesh. The Archangel Gabriel's pose reflects that of the two cherubim that shelter the cover of

(Continued on page 4)

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Novena of Masses in honor of

Our Lady of the Rosary

September 28 - October 6

TO BE OFFERED FOR YOUR INTENTIONS

THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY

Our First Parents - Baltimore Catechism

By Fr. Dismas Sayre, O.P.

Continuing with the Baltimore Catechism lessons:

Lesson 5

ON OUR FIRST PARENTS AND THEIR FALL

39 Q. Who were the first man and woman? A. The first man and woman were Adam and Eve.

In the beginning God created all things; something particular on each of the six days of Creation. (Gen. 1). On the first day He made light, on the second, the firmament, or the heavens, and on the sixth day He created man and called him Adam. God wished Adam to have a companion; so one day He caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, and then took from his side a rib, out of which he formed Eve. Now God could have made Eve as He made Adam, by forming her body out of the clay of the earth and breathing into it a soul, but He made Eve out of Adam's rib to show that they were to be husband and wife, and to impress upon their minds the nature and sacredness of the love and union that should exist between them.

40 Q. Were Adam and Eve innocent and holy when they came from the hand of God? A. Adam and Eve were innocent and holy when they came from the hand of God.

God placed Adam and Eve in Paradise, a large, beautiful garden, and gave them power over all the other creatures. Adam gave all the animals their appropriate names and they were obedient to him. Even lions, tigers, and other animals that we now fear so much, came and played about him. Our first parents, in their state of original innocence, were the happy friends of God, without sorrow or suffering of any kind.

*41 Q. Did God give any command to Adam and Eve? A. To try their obedience God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of a certain fruit which grew in the garden of Paradise.

He told them (Gen. 2) they could take of all the fruits in the garden except the fruit of one tree, and if they disobeyed Him by eating the fruit of that tree, they should surely die. God might have pointed out any tree, because it was simply a test of obedience. He gave them a very simple command, for if we are faithful in little things we shall surely be faithful in greater. Moreover, it is not precisely the consideration of what is forbidden, but of the authority by which it is forbidden that should deter us from violating the command and prove our fidelity. Thus disobedience to our parents and superiors, even in little things, becomes sinful. Someone might say: "Why did God not try their obedience by one of the Ten Commandments?" Let us examine them. "Remember the Sabbath." That one would be unnecessary: for every day was Sabbath with them; the only work was to praise and serve God. "Thou shalt not steal." They could not; everything was theirs; and so for the other Commandments. Therefore, God gave them a simple command telling them: If you obey, you and all your posterity will be happy; every wish

will be gratified, neither sorrow nor affliction shall come upon you and you shall never die; but if, on the contrary, you disobey, countless evils, misery and death will be your punishment. The earth, now so fruitful, shall bring forth no crops without cultivation, and after years of toil the dead bodies of yourselves and children must lie buried in its soil. So having the gift of free will they could take their choice, and either keep His command and be happy, or disobey Him and be miserable.

Here, we move forward a little to what is the beginning of our own salvation history.

THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE: THE STORY OF US

What is the story of Adam and Eve supposed to mean for us? Well, it's the story of man and his fall. You will see it replayed again and again throughout Scripture, how we *keep* falling away from God, and how He *keeps* calling us back to Himself through patriarchs and prophets, until finally, in the fullness of time, He gave us His only begotten Son in the flesh. And in His flesh, He makes possible the final and definitive reconciliation to God possible, *even when* we fall and sin again, through His Church and Her Sacraments. It's almost as if we didn't get the whole point of the story.

THE ATOMS, AND THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

Why not just spell everything out, and give us an account of what exactly happened? I think sometimes we're a little too clever for our own good. "In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to man in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm, and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 109). All the historicity of our first parents and how God came to be involved are not, again, the point. When we were children and asked our parents where we came from, did we give them the whole story of the Big Bang and human history? We as children are really asking of us a story, not just the *facts* but the *why*, which, as parents know all-too-well, is a child's favorite question.

Young children are not asking for a graphic sexual education, but rather the very human question, as very young scientists, of how and why we came to be. Even children want a *why*. I am guessing that wild beasts do not ask a *why*; rather, they have an inborn and genetic disposition to continue their species and an instinct of self-preservation to try to extend the life of their species or kind as long as possible.

Even something as basic as atoms, we begin with what we can widely call the Bohr model in elementary school. We either represent that as a kind of ball with spokes sticking out of the center to attach electrons, or in two-dimensional space, as a neutron ball surrounded by

“rings” where electrons dwell. Here, those young scientists in class might again ask *why*, to which an exasperated teacher might just say, “It’s the best model we can use right now, okay? And ask your parents where and why everything came from.”

It’s as if we’re asking two different questions, and giving two different answers. The modern historical-scientific mind wants every detail right and perfect, and then we end up getting overwhelmed, save for a few very specialized academics. But the ancient world was not asking that question. The question for the modern historical mind remains, what *did* the ancients believe?

WHAT A WEEK IT WAS! OR... WAS IT?

Let’s start in the beginning... What did the Church Fathers believe about a literal seven-day Creation? Here, there is a wide range of beliefs. There was some divergence on the “day” as being either a twenty-four hour period as we define it, or as we hear in Scripture, to the Lord “a day is as a thousand years” (Psalm 90:4, 2 Peter 3:8). St. Augustine gave, in my opinion, the most finessed explanation, writing that, “With the scriptures it is a matter of treating about the faith. For that reason, as I have noted repeatedly, if anyone, not understanding the mode of divine eloquence, should find something about these matters [about the physical universe] in our books, or hear of the same from those books, of such a kind that it seems to be at variance with the perceptions of his own rational faculties, let him believe that these other things are in no way necessary to the admonitions or accounts or predictions of the scriptures. In short, it must be said that our authors knew the truth about the nature of the skies, but it was not the intention of the Spirit of God, who spoke through them, to teach men anything that would not be of use to them for their salvation” (*The Literal Interpretation of Genesis 2:9, via Catholic Answers*).

OUR FIRST PARENTS, OUR FIRST CO-CONSPIRATORS

Now, let’s move on to our first parents, Adam and Eve. The names are not that important, as their names are in themselves symbolic, “Adam” meaning “man”, and “Eve” meaning “mother.” Were they *real* people? Yes, insofar at least that there were two first humans. As Pope St. John Paul II noted, “[M]y predecessor Pius XII has already affirmed that there is no conflict between evolution and the doctrine of the faith regarding man and his vocation, provided that we do not lose sight of certain fixed points” (*Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences: On Evolution*, 22 October, 1996). For our purposes, we can limit Pope Pius XII’s points to these:

- The exact manner of evolution is up for debate, but a Catholic can believe in it. That much is a question of science.
- God is the immediate creator of the human soul, and the soul is not materially generated through the parents (*cf CCC*, 366).
- The idea of polygenism (human origin from more than one set of ancestors), is erroneous. There was *one* first set of human parents. We, as we are, in the image and

likeness of God, come from these. Later intermingling is not, as far as I can discern from the texts, excluded.

- Scripture is divinely inspired and not in conflict with scientific truth, and is always the basis for dogmatic teaching. Any method of scriptural interpretation that seeks to make dogma obsolete is false.

The problem always comes in erroneously applying the senses of science and Scripture. While Charles Darwin is credited as the Father of Evolution, we cannot forget his contemporary, the Augustinian monk Gregor Johann Mendel, Father of Modern Genetics. We know that Mendel



Gregor Johann Mendel

read Darwin (even annotating a German translation of *Origin of Species*), although we don’t see any direct connection of Darwin reading Mendel, perhaps because of the lack of translation from the original German. Charles Darwin famously disliked German, calling it *Verdammt*, that is, “damned.” He could struggle along with it, as many of us do with various languages, but it was “*nacht jemens Geschmack*,” (not “according to his tastes,” or

“his cup of tea”). But together, they are truly the fathers of the modern life sciences.

So, theologically speaking, we have one set of first parents, who were the original source of our race and creation in the image and likeness of God. The image and likeness consists, not in the physical body, but in the eternal soul. That original holiness, by sin, was marred, not only for our first parents, but for all of us. Our human nature is thus forever weakened, and in need of God’s constant grace to build upon it, and to save us not only from the domain of material death, but spiritual death (eternal separation from God). Note that the remarks here in the old Baltimore Catechism do not exclude an allegorical tree – representing something that was forbidden to us. The idea is that God asks obedience of us, and when we disobey, when we cease to listen to God, we separate ourselves from God, and suffer from those consequences, whose ramifications go far beyond what any book of Scripture would be able to speak of. The modern *Catechism of the Catholic Church* adds that, “The account of the fall in Genesis 3 uses *figurative* language, but affirms a *primeval* event, a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man. Revelation gives us the *certainty of faith* that the whole of human history is marked by the original fault freely committed by our first parents” (390, *emphases mine*).

The question arises: Could there have been other proto-humans without the rational soul in the image and likeness of God? That is certainly possible and plausible. Science is still fleshing out exactly how we came to be and our lineage as *homo sapiens*. But their condition and history are not as much our concern, except for scientific research, and perhaps some anthropological studies and theories. One could engage in some theological speculation, but it would remain that – *speculation*.

So *can* one believe in a literal seven-day Creation? One could, but in part because that's *not* what Scripture is trying to tell us. There, one is asking questions about *science*. The question Scripture is answering is *Who* and in the end, the *Why*. The *Who* behind it all is God. The *Why* behind it all is to show forth the glory of God, and for God to bestow on His people His grace and everlasting life with Him, to save them from their sin, their spiritual death from God. ■



SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, September 25, 2027, at Our Lady of Lavang Church, Portland, Oregon. Our inaugural keynote speaker will be Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP, Promoter General of the Rosary for the Dominican Order.

Over half of the adults in the USA have no will or trust. Even if you don't include us in your will, please make these necessary preparations. *Please remember the Rosary Center in your will. By arranging a gift to the Rosary Center through your will, you can continue to support our apostolate of serving the Lord and His Mother into the future.*



Hail Mary as Fuel (Continued from page 1)

the ark and look down before where the Presence of the Lord was to tell Moses all that the Lord commanded him (cf. Genesis 25:10-22). But Mary does not boast or dismiss the angel for privileged status; rather, she humbly replies to the angel, "I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

It is interesting that a common medieval practice was to recite the "Proto Hail Mary" (that is, just the angelic greeting), and bow, kneel, or prostrate oneself in humility and showing reverence. Since, obviously, repeated prostrations or genuflections, could be tiring, it was considered penitential to say a large number of *Hail Marys*, often ending up at 150, as a reflection of the psalms. Here we are already seeing the seeds planted of the Rosary!

THE GREETING OF HER KINSWOMAN

After this, Mary goes in haste to visit her kinswoman, St. Elizabeth, who was already far along in her own miraculous pregnancy. St. Luke relates that St. Elizabeth "filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, 'Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb'" (Luke 1:41b-42). St. Elizabeth adds her own divinely-inspired proclamation that we have echoed for countless generations. Indeed, she *is* most blessed among women. Now, why would St. Elizabeth first say that Mary is most blessed, and *then* that blessed is the fruit of her womb? Should not Christ come first, since He is God? Indeed, God

is infinitely greater, but here, I believe she speaks of the wisdom that St. Augustine related, that "Mary heard God's word and kept it, and so she is blessed. She kept God's truth in her mind, a nobler thing than carrying his body in her womb. The truth and the body were both Christ: he was kept in Mary's mind insofar as he is truth, he was carried in her womb insofar as he is man; but what is kept in the mind is of a higher order than what is carried in the womb." That great blessing that is the Incarnate God comes into her life, and our own, through her own obedience to God.

FINALLY, THE PETITIONS

The word "prayer" is derived ultimately from the Latin *prex*, one of whose meanings was a request of another, which could be a request made to God or a god, but it just meant a request, in general. In some legal texts, this wording is still used, without any religious significance. Until now in the *Hail Mary*, we've only encountered two salutations – very spiritually significant salutations, but nevertheless, not really any kind of prayer. We find written evidence emerging in the late 15th and early 16th centuries of the common trope of asking Mary to pray for us and at the hour of our death. This doesn't mean that there weren't petitions made before then, only that they became much more formalized by then. It does seem to say that in St. Dominic's time, the *Hail Mary* would not have included this second part, the petition. If you follow the Dominican way of saying the Rosary, only the beginning, before the Mysteries, is different. We begin *In the name of the Father, etc.*, and *then* we say the first part of the *Hail Mary*, without the petition.

Of course, this should not surprise us. If you needed something from someone, and needed to ask, would you just run up to them; would you just blurt out your request? You would greet them, and if they were important, you might even praise them or recognize their high office, and *then* present your petition. Even with close ones we're very familiar with, we're probably not just going to say "give me the car keys" first thing. Could we *at least* get a hello or nice to see you? It does sound rather demanding or ungrateful. Obviously, if we're in danger, we may well just scream out, "Help!" and many beautiful prayers are just that, simple cries for help, but in the normal course of events, we follow a loving, civil approach to our petitions, and we recognize our own lowly status in recognizing ourselves as sinners, those who have failed God and ourselves in some way.

In these petitions to Our Lady, notice that we simply leave it in her hands. God knows what we need, and He knows our hearts and petitions already, spoken or unspoken. Like our daily bread in the *Our Father*, we ask for her help by her own prayers to her Son, Our Lord, for these things we need, that is, *now*, and those we will need in the most important moment of our lives, *at the hour of our death*, when we will be born into eternity, whether for salvation or perdition. As St. Paul teaches, "In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings" (Romans 8:26, NAB). It is enough simply to say and admit that we need help. And that might be the most beautiful part of prayer: the humble soul before God, that asks the Mother of Our Lord to be with him or her as he makes his petitions known. ■