

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

of the Kingdom of God, calls to conversion (cf. *Mk* 1:15) and forgives the sins of all who draw near to him in humble trust (cf. *Mk* 2:3-13; *Lk* 7:47- 48): the inauguration of that ministry of mercy which he continues to exercise until the end of the world, particularly through the Sacrament of Reconciliation which he has entrusted to his Church (cf. *Jn* 20:22-23). The mystery of light *par excellence* is the Transfiguration, traditionally believed to have taken place on Mount Tabor. The glory of the Godhead shines forth from the face of Christ as the Father commands the astonished Apostles to “listen to him” (cf. *Lk* 9:35 and parallels) and to prepare to experience with him the agony of the Passion, so as to come with him to the joy of the Resurrection and a life transfigured by the Holy Spirit. A final mystery of light is the institution of the Eucharist, in which Christ offers his body and blood as food under the signs of bread and wine, and testifies “to the end” his love for humanity (*Jn* 13:1), for whose salvation he will offer himself in sacrifice.

In these mysteries, apart from the miracle at Cana, *the presence of Mary remains in the background*. The Gospels make only the briefest reference to her occasional presence at one moment or other during the preaching of Jesus (cf. *Mk* 3:31-5; *Jn* 2:12), and they give no indication that she was present at the Last Supper and the institution of the Eucharist. Yet the role she assumed at Cana in some way accompanies Christ throughout his ministry. The revelation made directly by the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan and echoed by John the Baptist is placed upon Mary's lips at Cana, and it becomes the great maternal counsel which Mary addresses to the Church of every age: “Do whatever he tells you” (*Jn* 2:5). This counsel is a fitting introduction to the words and signs of Christ's public ministry and it forms the Marian foundation of all the “mysteries of light”.

The First Luminous Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3: 13-17) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

REFLECTION: This mystery of Jesus and John recalls the first proclamation of John when at the sound of Mary's voice, he leapt in his mother's womb – there too they were immersed in water, there too their very presence proclaimed God's affirmation that these were beloved children of God. There is no greater dignity than that which God chooses to conceive in a woman – both physically and spiritually. The light of Christ enters the world through us – whether by our nurturing in the womb or by our nurturing of others as they grow and become the persons God created them to be. It was through the motherhood of Mary and Elizabeth that Jesus and John were able to assume the roles God chose for them.

PRAYER: We pray that all women – individually and collectively realize, cherish and fulfill their unique nurturing role – the sacred trust God has given to woman – her ultimate dignity.

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

The Second Luminous Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Wedding at Cana. (John 2: 1-11) On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

REFLECTION: How fitting that it is Mary who becomes aware of the need in this momentous social event – the wine has run-out at the wedding reception. It is Mary who assumes responsibility to rectify the problem and she calls upon her son. With complete trust in his fulfillment, she tells the servants to “do whatever He tells you.”

PRAYER: We pray that all women recognize their dignity in their unique God-given gift to perceive need and resolve it – first petitioning God and then trusting Him to provide.

Third Luminous Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry. (Mark 1:14-15) After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

REFLECTION: What greater honor is given to a woman than when the child/children/people she has nurtured step-up and assume the role and responsibility God has given them. And she does so hidden - in the depths of her heart pondering and rejoicing in the good which God had begun in her and is now come to fruition. A woman’s countless yeses affirm her dignity and become her crown in the Kingdom.

PRAYER: We pray that every woman finds dignity in the tedium of household chores, in the patience of others’ baby-steps – whether a child or employee or spouse or friend – that every woman holds onto the hope of what is to come and when it does indeed arrive - that God’s grace suffice to bask silently in God’s glory.

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

The Fourth Luminous Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Transfiguration of Jesus. (Matthew 17: 1 – 8) After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone.

REFLECTION: Although Mary is not present at the Transfiguration of Jesus from his humanity to divinity, this mystery mirrors the transfiguration of Mary who full of grace conceived and brought to birth the Son of God - within her, the Word became flesh - her humanity was transformed with divine dignity.

PRAYER: We pray that each and every woman recognizes her God-given grace to transform the world – that through her – Christ becomes and the world becomes a better place.

The Fifth Luminous Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Lord’s Supper. (Matthew 26: 26-30) While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it with you new in the kingdom of my Father.” Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

REFLECTION: There is no greater mystery than Jesus transcending bread and wine to become His body and blood that He may become one with us physically - so that we might manifest Him spiritually. And once again this echoes Mary’s surrender of her body that Christ might become. How often we as women surrender ourselves for the life – for the good of others. There is no greater dignity.

PRAYER: We pray that each and every woman recognizes her God-given dignity and manifests that dignity in all that she thinks, says and does; that Christ might be her beginning, her end, her all.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES



Saint Ann's CCW and Jr. CCW, DeBary, Florida celebrate NCCW Sunday January 15, 2017 with their pastor, Father Peter Henry. Photo courtesy of Kathy Dempsey.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES (Wednesday and Sunday)

RESOURCE: *Mulieris Dignitatem*, Chapter V Jesus Christ, First Witnesses of the Resurrection

16. From the beginning of Christ's mission, women show to him and to his mystery a special *sensitivity which is characteristic of their femininity*. It must also be said that this is especially confirmed in the Paschal Mystery, not only at the Cross but also at the dawn of the Resurrection. The women *are the first at the tomb*. They are the first to find it empty. They are the first to hear: "He is not here. *He has risen, as he said*" (*Mt 28:6*). They are the first to embrace his feet (cf. *Mt 28:9*). They are also the first to be called to announce this truth to the Apostles (cf. *Mt 28:1-10; Lk 24:8-11*). The Gospel of John (cf. also *Mk 16: 9*) emphasizes *the special role of Mary Magdalene*. She is the first to meet the Risen Christ. At first she thinks he is the gardener; she recognizes him only when he calls her by name: "Jesus said to her, 'Mary'. She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God'. Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her" (*Jn 20:16-18*).

Hence she came to be called "the apostle of the Apostles".^[38] Mary Magdalene was the first eyewitness of the Risen Christ, and for this reason she was also *the first to bear witness to him*

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

before the Apostles. This event, in a sense, crowns all that has been said previously about Christ entrusting divine truths to women as well as men. One can say that this fulfilled the words of the Prophet: "I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Jl 3:1). On the fiftieth day after Christ's Resurrection, these words are confirmed once more in the Upper Room in Jerusalem, at the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete (cf. Act 2:17). Everything that has been said so far about Christ's attitude to women confirms and clarifies, in the Holy Spirit, the truth about the equality of man and woman. One must speak of an essential "equality", since both of them - the woman as much as the man - are created in the image and likeness of God. Both of them are equally capable of receiving the outpouring of divine truth and love in the Holy Spirit. Both receive his salvific and sanctifying "visits".

[38] Cf. Rabanus Maurus, "De vita beatae Mariae Magdalene," XXVII: "Salvator...ascensionis suae eam (=Mariam Magdalenam) ad apostolos instituit apostolam" (PL 112, 1474). "Facta est Apostolorum Apostola per hoc quod ei committitur ut resurrectionem dominicam discipulis annuntiet": St. Thomas Aquinas, "In Ioannem Evangelistam Expositio," c. XX, L. III 6 ("Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Comment. in Matthaum et Ioannem Evangelistas"), Ed. Parmen. X, 629.

Rosarium Virginis Mariae, Chapter II Mysteries of Christ – Mysteries of His Mother The Glorious Mysteries

23. "The contemplation of Christ's face cannot stop at the image of the Crucified One. He is the Risen One!"⁽²⁹⁾ The Rosary has always expressed this knowledge born of faith and invited the believer to pass beyond the darkness of the Passion in order to gaze upon Christ's glory in the Resurrection and Ascension. Contemplating the Risen One, Christians *rediscover the reasons for their own faith* (cf. 1Cor 15:14) and relive the joy not only of those to whom Christ appeared – the Apostles, Mary Magdalene and the disciples on the road to Emmaus – but also *the joy of Mary*, who must have had an equally intense experience of the new life of her glorified Son. In the Ascension, Christ was raised in glory to the right hand of the Father, while Mary herself would be raised to that same glory in the Assumption, enjoying beforehand, by a unique privilege, the destiny reserved for all the just at the resurrection of the dead. Crowned in glory – as she appears in the last glorious mystery – Mary shines forth as Queen of the Angels and Saints, the anticipation and the supreme realization of the eschatological state of the Church.

At the centre of this unfolding sequence of the glory of the Son and the Mother, the Rosary sets before us the third glorious mystery, Pentecost, which reveals the face of the Church as a family gathered together with Mary, enlivened by the powerful outpouring of the Spirit and ready for the mission of evangelization. The contemplation of this scene, like that of the other glorious mysteries, ought to lead the faithful to an ever greater appreciation of their new life in Christ, lived in the heart of the Church, a life of which the scene of Pentecost itself is the great "icon". The glorious mysteries thus lead the faithful to *greater hope for the eschatological goal* towards which they journey as members of the pilgrim People of God in history. This can only impel them to bear courageous witness to that "good news" which gives meaning to their entire existence.

⁽²⁹⁾ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001), 28: AAS 93 (2001), 284.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The First Glorious Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Resurrection (Mark 16:6-7) He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him. But go and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you.'"

REFLECTION: It is because of the resurrection that women especially mothers always can trust in the Lord for all their needs during good and bad times. Jesus honored Mary Magdalene by appearing to her first after his resurrection bestowing upon all women the dignity of proclaiming the gospel to all. This Easter Sequence rejoices in God's unconditional love and mercy. A woman's dignity is intrinsic to God's love of her.

PRAYER:

Sequence

Christians, to the Paschal Victim

Offer your thankful praises!

A Lamb the sheep redeems;

Christ, who only is sinless,

Reconciles sinners to the Father.

Death and life have contended

in that combat stupendous:

The Prince of life, who died,

reigns immortal.

Speak, Mary, declaring

What you saw, wayfaring.

"The tomb of Christ, who is living,

The glory of Jesus' resurrection;

Bright angels attesting,

The shroud and napkin resting.

Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;

to Galilee he goes before you."

Christ indeed from death is risen, our new

life obtaining.

Have mercy, victor King,

ever reigning!

Amen. Alleluia.

The poetic English translation of the sequences of the Roman Missal are taken from the Roman Missal approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States © 1964 by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The Second Glorious Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Ascension of Jesus. (Mark 16:19) So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God.

REFLECTION: Upon his Ascension, Christ – the bridegroom completed the covenant made with the Church – his bride - and in doing so validates the equality of women as well as their dignity.

RESOURCE: *Mulieris Dignitatem*, VII THE CHURCH - THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

The "great mystery"

23. Of fundamental importance here are the words of the Letter to the Ephesians: "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'. *This mystery is a profound one, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the Church*" (5:25-32).

In this Letter the author expresses the truth about the Church as the bride of Christ, and also indicates how this truth is *rooted in the biblical reality of the creation of the human being as male and female*. Created in the image and likeness of God as a "unity of the two", both have been called to a spousal love. Following the description of creation in the Book of Genesis (2:18-25), one can also say that this fundamental call appears in the creation of woman, and is inscribed by the Creator in the institution of marriage, which, according to Genesis 2:24, has the character of a union of persons ("*communio personarum*") from the very beginning. Although not directly, the very description of the "beginning" (cf. *Gen* 1:27; 2:24) shows that the whole "ethos" of mutual relations between men and women has to correspond to the personal truth of their being.

All this has already been considered. The Letter to the Ephesians once again confirms this truth, while at the same time comparing the spousal character of the love between man and woman to the mystery of Christ and of the Church. *Christ is the Bridegroom of the Church - the Church is the Bride of Christ*. This analogy is not without precedent; it transfers to the New Testament what was already contained *in the Old Testament*, especially in the prophets Hosea, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Isaiah.^[48] The respective passages deserve a separate analysis. Here we will cite only one text. This is how God speaks to his Chosen People through the Prophet: "Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. *For your Maker is your husband*, the Lord of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is *your Redeemer*, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

Redeemer. ... For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, *but my steadfast love shall not depart from you*, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you" (Is 54:4-8, 10).

Since the human being - man and woman - has been created in God's image and likeness, God can speak about himself through the lips of the Prophet using language which is essentially human. In the text of Isaiah quoted above, the expression of God's love is "*human*", but the *love* itself is *divine*. Since it is God's love, its spousal character is properly divine, even though it is expressed by the analogy of a man's love for a woman. The woman-bride is Israel, God's Chosen People, and this choice originates exclusively in God's gratuitous love. It is precisely this love which explains the Covenant, a Covenant often presented as a marriage covenant which God always renews with his Chosen People. On the part of God the Covenant is a lasting "commitment"; he remains faithful to his spousal love even if the bride often shows herself to be unfaithful.

This *image of spousal love*, together with the figure of the divine Bridegroom - a very clear image in the texts of the Prophets - finds crowning confirmation in the Letter to the Ephesians (5:23-32). *Christ* is greeted as the bridegroom by John the Baptist (cf. *Jn* 3:27-29). Indeed Christ applies to himself this comparison drawn from the Prophets (cf. *Mk* 2:19-20). The Apostle Paul, who is a bearer of the Old Testament heritage, writes to the Corinthians: "I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I betrothed you to Christ to present you as a pure bride to her one husband" (2 *Cor* 11:2). But the fullest expression of the truth about Christ the Redeemer's love, according to the analogy of spousal love in marriage, is found in the Letter to the Ephesians: "*Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her*" (5:25), thereby fully confirming the fact that the Church is the bride of Christ: "The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer" (*Is* 54:5). In Saint Paul's text the analogy of the spousal relationship moves simultaneously in two directions which make up the whole of the "great mystery" ("*sacramentum magnum*").

The covenant proper to spouses "explains" the spousal character of the union of Christ with the Church, and in its turn this union, as a "great sacrament", determines the sacramentality of marriage as a holy covenant between the two spouses, man and woman. Reading this rich and complex passage, which *taken as a whole is a great analogy*, we must *distinguish* that element which expresses the human reality of interpersonal relations from that which expresses in symbolic language the "great mystery" which is divine.

[48] Cf. for example, *Hos* 1:2; 2:16-18; *Jer* 2:2; *Ezek* 16:8; *Is* 50:1; 54:5-8.

PRAYER: We especially pray for women who are striving to keep their faith during troubling times in their relationships with others – especially their spouse – and in the many issues of their lives, may they always remember their dignity as a bride of Christ.

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

The Third Glorious Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

REFLECTION: Working women especially deal daily with difficult people and need help to keep calm. They need the gifts (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear – wonder - of the Lord) of the Holy Spirit to let the fruits (charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity) of the Holy Spirit shine forth. It is the grace of the Holy Spirit which infuses within and overflows without that gives women their dignity.

PRAYER: We pray for all women that the gifts of the Spirit overshadow them and the fruits of the Spirit are expressed in all that they think, say and do.

The Fourth Glorious Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Assumption (Revelation 12:1) A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

REFLECTION: When we think of heaven and Mary's Assumption, we think of all those who have gone before and now with Mary intercede for us. We think of our grandmothers and mothers who are keeping and sharing the faith to all generations – a continuum from heaven to earth.

PRAYER: We pray for every woman on the continuum and ourselves that we assume our God-given responsibility to pass on our faith.

The Fifth Glorious Mystery

SCRIPTURE: The Coronation (Judith 15:9-10)

When they came to her, all with one accord blessed her, saying:

“You are the glory of Jerusalem!
You are the great pride of Israel!
You are the great boast of our nation!
By your own hand you have done all this.
You have done good things for Israel,
and God is pleased with them.
May the Almighty Lord bless you forever!”
And all the people said, “Amen!”

THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

REFLECTION: This reading from the Book of Judith is an apt description of Mary, Queen of Heaven and Earth. Each woman should internalize it as addressed to her. An example of the “good things” that God is “pleased with” are women who share their faith by helping others - volunteering wherever needed and who use their God given gifts to the fullest. Just as Mary is crowned with glory – so too all women are crowned with dignity.

PRAYER: We pray that all women will look to Mary to emulate her as their model of dignity and vocation. We pray that all women know in the depths of their being that “God is pleased with them.”



Prayer to Our Lady of Good Counsel

*God of heavenly wisdom,
you have given us Mary, Mother of Jesus,
to be our guide and counselor.
Grant that we may always seek her motherly help in this life
and so enjoy her blessed presence in the life to come.
O Mother of Good Counsel,
Patroness of the National Council of Catholic Women,
intercede for us,
that we may be wise, courageous, and loving leaders of the Church.
Help us, dear mother, to know the mind of Jesus, your son.
May the Holy Spirit fill us with reverence for God's creation,
and compassion for all God's children.
May our labors of love on earth enhance the reign of God
and may God's gifts of faith and living hope
prepare us for the fullness of
the world to come.
Amen.*