

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Fifty years ago, the crew of Apollo 8 read from the Book of Genesis as they orbited the moon. Astronauts Bill Anders, Jim Lovell, and Frank Borman recited Genesis chapter 1, verses 1 through 10. They started with “In the beginning, God created...” and they concluded with “God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth.” As I reflect over these last fifty years, how far we have strayed from the sense of God as Creator, God as the Almighty. The loss of the sacred, especially at Christmastime, can be disheartening and a little sad. However, we can look to all of creation and the mystery of our redemption with profound joy. Like those astronauts some fifty years ago, who recited the words “In the beginning...” we too know that the God who has no beginning, gave us the breath of life and formed our world out of nothing.

We do not have to travel to the moon to see the God of Creation. But to know God we must spend time with him. Spend time in prayer with him. A most profound prayer to understand the God who created us and also redeemed us is the Most Holy Rosary. I have been writing scriptural prayers books for nearly 30 years, and yet each day immersed in Scripture unveils yet another aspect of the profound wonder of God as seen through the lens of the Rosary – the significant events of the life of Mary and Jesus.

In the 1990s, I wrote From Genesis to Revelation. This prayer book was a collection of seven scriptural rosaries based on selections from the entirety of Sacred Scriptures. This rosary meditation prayer book was based on thematic collections, such as, the 150 Psalms, the Prophets, the Blessed Words of Jesus and Mary, and the writings of St. Paul.

A Scriptural Rosary simplifies, yet spiritually edifies, the meditation process of the praying of the Most Holy Rosary. A Scriptural Rosary is a conversation with God. He speaks to us through His Word and we respond with the Our Father, or the Angelic salutation, the Hail Mary. Sacred Scriptures are added to the praying of the Most Holy Rosary to keep us alert, to help us understand the mysteries, and to converse with God in the presence of His Blessed Mother.

For many centuries, the Most Holy Rosary consisted of fifteen decades prayed in three groups of mysteries - the Joyful, the Sorrowful, and the Glorious. Pope Saint John Paul II in his 2002 Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* recommended praying a new set of mysteries called the Luminous Mysteries. The Luminous Mysteries filled in the chronological gap from the Fifth Joyful Mystery with Jesus as a boy of twelve to the First Sorrowful Mystery when Jesus begins His Passion in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Luminous Mysteries complement the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries.

For some, the addition of the Luminous Mysteries may cause concern because of the departure from tradition. Rather we should be renewed and energized by the addition of these new Luminous Mysteries, looking forward to a revitalization of the praying of the Most Holy Rosary. Over the years, I have had many requests to update the Seven Scriptural Rosaries in From Genesis to Revelation with meditations for the Luminous Mysteries.

First, in 2004, The Psalter of Jesus and Mary updated Book 4: The Psalms in From Genesis to Revelation. The Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious scriptural mysteries remained the same 150 Psalms, as presented in Book Four. To unveil the new Luminous Mysteries in light of Scripture, I selected meditations from the thirty-one Proverbs, the wise words of Solomon.

Next, in 2009, Pearls of Peace updated Book 6: SS Peter and Paul in From Genesis to Revelation. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI declared a Jubilee Year of St. Paul from June 2008 through June 2009. It was during that jubilee year that the selections for the Luminous Mysteries were completed. The Our Father scripture meditations focused on praying for peace. Additionally, each Our Father meditation recalled the holy places where Jesus lived, preached, taught, and died. The Hail Mary verses remained the same selections from the epistles of St. Paul. New St. Paul reflections were selected for the Luminous Mysteries. Keeping with the theme of Jesus' life on earth, this prayer book was illustrated with photography from the Holy Land.

Now, in 2019, I focus on the theme of Creation and how "In the beginning..." is a unifying theme to meditate on the entirety of the Gospels as reflected in the mysteries of the Most Holy Rosary. This book, "In the Beginning...", updates Book 1: The Pentateuch in From Genesis to Revelation. The Our Father meditations are selected from Sacred Scripture verses that focus on "In the Beginning...". The Hail Mary meditations are selected from the Pentateuch [Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy]. Additional verses are selected from the Catholic Old Testament books of Wisdom and Sirach. All new meditations for the Luminous Mysteries were selected for this book.

In closing, I would like to extend a special thank you to Father Michael Dueterhaus, Diocese of Arlington, for his wise counsel. Without his efforts to keep me focused and thinking about the "things above," these prayer books would never have been possible.

Christine Haapala
Fairfax, Virginia