

An apologetics classic is now even better! In January, Emmaus Road Publishing released a new edition of the popular *Catholic for a Reason II: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mother of God*. This second edition has been expanded to include 40 pages of new material from Scott Hahn—an inspiring new chapter on the scriptural roots of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary and a new appendix on how we can trace the development of the Marian dogmas from Scripture.

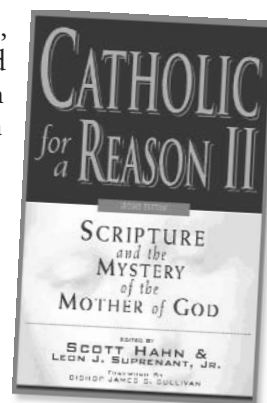
The following selection is taken from the new chapter by Scott Hahn, “The Luminous Mysteries,” which complements his wife Kimberly’s original chapter on the Glorious, Joyful, and Sorrowful Mysteries.

## **Catholic for a Reason II, Second Edition**

### **Chapter 10, “The Luminous Mysteries”**

by Scott Hahn

At the time this book first appeared, the mysteries of the Rosary had held steady for almost half a millennium since Pope St. Pius V standardized them in 1569. I’m sure my wife Kimberly, who authored the chapter preceding this one [on the Glorious, Joyful, and Sorrowful Mysteries], assumed her meditations could suffice for at least another half-millennium. Little did any of us know that Pope John Paul II would soon release an apostolic letter on the world’s favorite Marian devotion.



With *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* (The Rosary of the Virgin Mary, RVM), released on October 16, 2002, the Holy Father celebrated the twenty-fifth year of his pontificate by inaugurating a Marian Year. Urging all Catholics to take up the Rosary more often, he offered brief meditations on the standard fifteen mysteries, and then proposed five new mysteries of the Rosary: the “Mysteries of Light,” or Luminous Mysteries:

1. Jesus’ baptism in the Jordan,
2. His self-manifestation at the wedding of Cana,
3. His proclamation of the kingdom of God,
4. His Transfiguration,
5. His institution of the Eucharist.

News reports treated the story in a sensational way, as if the Pope had added a fourth person to the Trinity or five new books to the Bible. But he had good, sound reasons for adding to the mysteries—reasons grounded in Scripture and Tradition.

In the letter, the Pope points out that the Luminous Mysteries bridge a gap in the traditional mysteries, which jumped from Jesus’ childhood (the last Joyful Mystery) to the very eve of His death (the first Sorrowful Mystery). The five new mysteries focus on the public life of Our Lord, His years of active ministry. They also emphasize Jesus’ divinity, since each is an action that only God could accomplish. In the words of Pope John Paul: “Each of these mysteries is a revelation of the Kingdom now present in the very person of Jesus” (RVM, no. 21).

Putting the media hype aside, we find that the idea of “additional” mysteries of the Rosary is nothing new. The Rosary is a method of meditation, and Catholics have used it profitably to contemplate many different moments in the lives of Jesus and Mary. Even before 1569, when St. Pius V settled on the 15 Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, the Rosary had inspired a great groundswell of devotion in Europe. In Germany alone, on the eve of the Reformation, Rosary confraternities became extremely popular; by the end of the fifteenth century, at least 100,000 Germans had joined one. The scenes used by Christians for meditation varied greatly, but most sets intersected at many points with the 15 mysteries that would eventually become the standard.

Even after 1569, the faithful were free to meditate on nonstandard scenes from the Gospels. In 1957, a Maltese priest named George Preca published a prayer book titled *Colloquies with God*. In it, he proposed a new set of five meditations, which he called the Mysteries of Light. His list presages the Pope’s in many ways, and that is probably no coincidence. Pope John Paul beatified Fr. Preca on May 9, 2001.

The proof of a prayer is in the praying. We know for a fact that these meditations illuminated Blessed George Preca’s way to heaven. Pope John Paul wishes us all to walk in the light of these mysteries.

I like to think of the Luminous Mysteries as the mysteries of our salvation. Of course, all the actions of Jesus’ life were salvific. But these mysteries, in particular, coalesce around the idea that is the very essence of our salvation: Jesus’ divine sonship. For Jesus came not merely to save us from sins—though that in itself is a marvel. He came to save us for sonship. In Christ, we are all made children of God. We are, in the Church’s ancient phrase, “sons in the Son.” It was for the sake of our divinization that God took flesh. In the fourth century, Saint Athanasius put it poetically: “The Son of God became Son of Man so that the sons of men might become sons of God” (*On the Incarnation of the Word*, no. 8).

In the Luminous Mysteries, we come to see Christ’s divine sonship and His desire for us to share in it. He wants us to call God “Abba! Father!” and mean it, as He does. This doesn’t mean that we are children of God in the same way that Jesus is the Son of God. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. We are God’s children by adoption. Yet even that term, wonderful as it is, falls short of the glory that is ours: for our sonship is not merely a legal pronouncement but is a sharing in God’s life and His nature.

That is the truth that shines for me in the Luminous Mysteries. I’ve written the following meditations in hope that you, too, will see it and glory in it, giving thanks to the Father of Light, from whom we receive every good and perfect gift.

### **The Second Luminous Mystery The Wedding Feast of Cana (Jn. 2:1–11)**

It is curious that John the Evangelist invites us to a wedding, yet never tells us the names of the newlyweds. Instead, another man and another woman take center stage. The drama at Cana turns on the words and deeds of Jesus and His mother, Mary.

Mary notices that the wine has run out—an embarrassment for the young couple. She simply points this out to Jesus—“They have no wine” (v. 3)—knowing that He (and only He) can make things right.

When family members converse, they draw from a shared language of love, a common vocabulary of words, gestures, and facial expressions. Their speech is often elliptical, as Mary’s was when she made her observation. The statement implied a request; she didn’t need to give it voice. She knew her Son would refuse her nothing.

Indeed, Jesus responds with a Hebrew idiom that often expressed consent or deference: “Woman, what have you to do with Me?” (v. 4; cf. Mk. 1:24, 5:7; Lk. 8:28).

Mary turns to the servants and says, “Do whatever He tells you” (v. 5).

The exchange sounds unusual to our ears. First, because it consists of idioms from a strange language

(Aramaic) translated into yet another language (Greek), before being again translated to English. But it sounds strange also because John, the beloved disciple, is allowing us in on an intimate conversation. It is no impertinence for us to be there. We are not eavesdroppers. We, too, are family.

Jesus calls Mary “woman”; some people misinterpret this as a slight. But we know that Jesus would never sin by showing dishonor to His mother. “Woman” was a common form of address in the land of Jesus. Still, He is up to something more. By calling Mary “woman,” He is evoking the title of Eve, the mother of all the living. What is more, many interpreters note that this takes place on the “seventh day” of John’s Gospel (the third day since the fourth day).

Saint John shows us what Saint Paul, later on in the New Testament, will tell us (see 1 Cor. 15:45). Jesus is the new Adam. With this miracle—an act of creation—He begins His public work of making all things new. Jesus turns jars of water, used for washing hands and feet, into the finest of wine.

John shows Jesus to be the New Adam and Mary to be the New Eve, mother of all the living, and so Mother of the Church. The wine of His new creation suggests the blood He will pour out when His “hour” has come, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. . . .

Jesus, You invite all Your beloved disciples to look on Your mother as their own. We are Your brothers and sisters in baptism. And so the Mother of God is our mother, too. May we go to her in all our needs, knowing that she will intercede for us, as she interceded for those long-ago newlyweds, and knowing that You will deny her nothing. May we always heed her when she tells us: “Do whatever he tells you.” ■

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*To order Catholic for a Reason II, Second Edition for only \$15.95, call (800) 398-5470 or visit [www.emmausroad.org](http://www.emmausroad.org). For more on the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, ask about The Luminous Mysteries: Biblical Reflections on the Life of Christ, by Tim Gray (\$11.95).*