

The Handmaid of the Lord, the intercessor of salvation history!

- **There is a pattern in scripture that repeats itself over and over again...**
 - When a covenant mediator commits a sin.... he opens wide the door for sin to wreck havoc on his family.
 - The effect is always devastating and always ruptures the unity of the family and communion with God!
 - Believe it or not... this will shed light on the role of the “Handmaid of the Lord”
 - In his book, *Lord Have Mercy*, pages 86-87, Dr. Scott Hahn pointed out that the price we pay for committing sin is the sin itself. Said in another way, “be careful what you ask for... you just might get it!” If you want to be cut off from the source of life, of grace and perfect contentment... fine, have it your way!
- when Adam chose to save his skin, and forgo his and his brides souls’,
 - cowering to the threats of the ancient serpent
 - partaking in the forbidden fruit,
 - he opened wide the door of destruction and allowed his sin in to wreck havoc upon his marriage, and his children (c.f. Gen.3).
 - Adam was cast from the garden sanctuary
 - ruptured the perfect communion he enjoyed with God
 - could no longer abide with the “all holy” perfection, that is the Lord, for “nothing unclean can enter it” (Rev. 21:27),
 - or else they may have been consumed by the fire of God’s love (c.f. 1 Cor. 3:10-17)!
- **Like Father.... Like Son...**
 - **Genesis 4:3–12** (RSVCE) *3 In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4 and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry,*

and his countenance fell. 6 The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." 8 Cain said to Abel his brother, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And the LORD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

- **Like Adam...**

- God will call his son to repentance, and reconciliation... but, when he persists in his sin....
- Cain would be "cast out"... excommunicated from the family...

- **Excommunication... God's Love for his children**

- Too often we see excommunication as an act of harshness, however, this is not at all what is intended.
- Adam, Cain, and all who refuse to repent, and subsist in their sinfulness, are cast out
- in hopes that they will one day come to repentance and reunification with the family (c.f. 1 Cor. 5:1-5).
- God desires ALL men to be saved (c.f. 1 Ti 2:4),
- The Lord has made it the purpose of salvation history to restore
 - the ruptured relationship mankind has with Him,
 - to redeem the sinner, the murderer of the Lord's innocent son.

- **Protector and mediator**

- The family has grown considerably from the couple that entered into the Covenant of Matrimony on that first Sabbath day!
- Due to a fallen nature... they seek the false notion of “Justice” in revenge.
- God stood in the gap... between Cain the family
 - Protecting his life with the mark of the “sign”
 - Mediating between the son’s always at war with one another!
- **The repeating pattern...**
 - Evil line of Cain is in stark contrast to the righteous line of Seth
 - Cain’s line will eventually corrupt Seth’s line, leading to the destruction of the human race in the great flood (C.f. Gen 4-8).
 - The sons’ of Noah will forever be at odds with each other, thanks to the sin of Ham who tried to usurp the right of the “first-born” son from his brother Shem (c.f. Gen 9).
 - The sons of Abraham too are at war, even today, thanks to the sinful choices of Abraham and Sarah taking matters into their own hands and fathering Ishmael with Hagar (c.f. Gen 16:4).
 - The sons of Isaac didn’t miss a beat when they too followed the pattern set before them, to lie, cheat and threaten to kill each other, vying for position, power, and the love of their father (c.f. Gen 27).
 - The sons’ of Jacob do not disappoint, giving us plenty to look at, selling their brother Joseph into slavery (c.f. Gen 37), attempting to usurp their father’s authority as tribal leader (c.f. Gen 35:22), drunkenness, perversity and the like (c.f. Gen 38).
 - Even the sons’ of Israel brought up from slavery in Egypt rebelled against God, practiced perverse sexual relations, and fought against each other almost perpetually (c.f. Ex 32).
- **The Great King David...**
 - Only man in the entire bible to be called a “man after God’s own heart” (c.f. 1 Sam 13:13-14)
 - Far less than the immaculate image this title conveys

- Among his many sins...
 - Followed in the parental footsteps of Eli and Samuel the prophets (c.f. 1 Sam 2:12 & 1 Sam. 8) and did NOT punish his wayward children
 - which proved devastating for the House of the King of Israel.
 - Committed the sin of adultery with Bathsheba
 - Tried to cover it up by lying to, plotting and murdering her husband Uriah,
- David opened wide the door to sin and corruption among his many sons and daughters (c.f. 2 Sam 11 & 13).
 - wickedness ensues in the hearts of the children of the great King.
 - David's son Amnon lusted for his half sister Tamar, who was an upright young virgin.
 - After Amnon takes her by force, he mocks her and has her put out in shame.
 - Tamar's brother, Absalom brings the case to their father David who, like Eli and Samuel, did NOTHING to discipline his sinful son.
 - After two years of pleading for justice, Absalom takes matters into his own hands,
 - hatches a plan and has Amnon killed. Fleeing the country, Absalom runs to a neighboring Kingdom in hopes of saving his own life from the "justice" of his father.
 - David grieved the loss of his sons', and mourned "... for his son day after day... And the spirit of the king longed to go forth to Absalom" (2 Sam 13-37-39).
 - Years pass, and still there is no resolution, no justice.
 - It would take the scheming of Joab, David's General to push him to take the next step.

- **Enter the Handmaid of the King...**

- **2 Samuel 14:1–7** (RSVCE) *1 Now Joab the son of Zeruah perceived that the king's heart went out to Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to Tekoa, and fetched from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning garments; do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead; 3 and go to the king, and speak thus to him." So Joab put the words in her mouth. 4 When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, "Help, O king." 5 And the king said to her, "What is your trouble?" She answered, "Alas, I am a widow; my husband is dead. 6 And your handmaid had two sons, and they quarreled with one another in the field; there was no one to part them, and one struck the other and killed him. 7 And now the whole family has risen against your handmaid, and they say, 'Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew'; and so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal which is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant upon the face of the earth."*

- Absalom will be reunited with his father
 - he will also plot to steal away his Kingdom, and his father's concubines
 - which will result in his murder, while hanging from a tree, by the very General who tried to bring him back.
- Let's look at this Handmaid a bit closer...
 - Sure... she made it up, but... the parallels are intriguing
- **Just like in Genesis 4,**
 - she has 2 sons
 - one son kills the other

- the surviving son is cast out and then chased by the family for vengeance
- just like in Genesis 4 there is someone to intercede on his behalf in order to save his life.
 - What is new is that instead of the Lord God acting in the role of the **protector** and **mediator**, it's **their mother**, a "**woman**" who describes herself as the "handmaid" of the King.
 - This "woman" devoted herself totally to David as a HIS handmaid, which signified a complete gift of self.
- imagine having the guts to stand up, to intercede, for a murder when the entire family is set against you,
 - lusting for his blood?
 - What courage this would take to look past the emotion of retaliation
 - to seek true justice...
 - reconciliation with the family and communion with the Lord once again.
- Could this be a key to understanding the role of the handmaid?
 - Has the Lord laid the groundwork for a future "woman" to act as intercessor between the sons'?
- **Another Mother... acting as the intercessor for peace...**
 - I can think of another mother who also found herself as an intercessor to the King on behalf of two brothers?
 - Recall the time when Bathsheba ascended to the throne at the right hand of the King of Israel, her son Solomon,
 - the "**Gebirah**" (literally means the "great lady" from the Hebrew),
- **The Queen Mother in the Kingdom of David...**
 - From the moment King Solomon bowed to Bathsheba, and she sat on HER throne, until God sent His prophet Jeremiah to warn of the coming exile into Babylon,
 - some four hundred years later,

- there would be a Queen in the Kingdom of David (c.f. Jer. 13:18,20).
 - It was, and still is, the longest Dynasty in human history bar none, and the Queen was, and still is, the mother of the King... never his wife.
- **1 Kings 2:19–25** (RSVCE) *19 So Bathsheba went to King Solomon, to speak to him on behalf of Adonijah. And the king rose to meet her, and bowed down to her; then he sat on his throne, and had a seat brought for the king's mother; and she sat on his right. 20 Then she said, "I have one small request to make of you; do not refuse me." And the king said to her, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you." 21 She said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as his wife." 22 King Solomon answered his mother, "And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also; for he is my elder brother, and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruah." 23 Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life! 24 Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me, and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day." 25 So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.*
- Adonijah, Solomon's brother, was no fool, by asking Bathsheba to intercede for him to the King he stood a very good chance of getting what he was after.
 - It was an issue because Abishag just happened to be the last concubine of their father King David,
 - as the old saying goes, "he who has the King's wives is the King!"
 - Adonijah had only one play he could make if he wanted any shot at the throne,

- he had to have Bathsheba, the Lord's handmaid (c.f. Ps 86:14-17),
 - the official intercessor/mediator of the people of Israel to the King,
 - make the pitch on his behalf for David's concubine.
 - The plan backfired and Solomon, being the wise King, knew exactly what he was up to, so he had him executed.
 - "There will be no more uprisings in the family, thank you very much!"
 - This "**woman**", the Kings' mother would always act as intercessor on behalf of the people of the Kingdom, standing in the gap, if you will, of the brothers at war with one another
 - She was the "handmaid" of the Lord, totally dedicated to the mission of her son, who was the "anointed" of Israel... said another way... the "messiah" of Israel
 - when she was deported along with her son to Babylon (c.f. 2 Kings 24:12-15), the people would **long** for another "woman" to come,
 - a virgin, a young woman who would give birth to the Son of David once again (c.f. Is 7:14, Is 9:6)!
- **The framework of Salvation History**
 - the role of a "**woman**" who, as the "**handmaid**", is completely dedicated to the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords,
 - to be His **instrument** of peace and reconciliation between the sons and daughters of God the Father.
 - This "woman" would stand in the gap as **intercessor** to the Father on behalf of His children.
 - She would be the **Queen** in the Kingdom of her son...
 - His "**Gebirah**"
 - Quoting from St. Augustine, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 129, tells us, "**the New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.**"

- Therefore, as the Fathers of the Church have done for two millennia, we will take this pattern as our guide in interpreting the New Testament in order to seek out the NEW “woman” and “Handmaid of the Lord”.
- **The Handmaid of the Lord...**
 - **Luke 1:38** (RSVCE) *38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.*
 - Bathsheba is a type of Mary.
 - The same is true of the old woman whom Joab sent to convince David to recall his son to court
 - Where as Bathsheba is only a foreshadowing,
 - Mary is the reality.
 - Mary would truly be the “handmaid” of the Lord,
 - the young virgin,
 - the Queen Mother who will sit at the right hand of the King of Kings, in Glory,
 - **interceding** for the sons and daughters of the NEW Israel (Heb. 12)
 - in order that the brothers will be reunited once again and communion will be restored between God and man!
 - **Lumen Gentium - par. 56:** *Thus Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God’s salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as freely cooperating in the work of human salvation through faith and obedience.*
- **The “Woman” intercessor...**

- Just as we spoke of yesterday... Mary is the NEW WOMAN... the NEW EVE...
 - Only she DOES NOT intercede between the Serpent and Adam...
 - Rather she intercedes between her Son, the King, and His wayward Brothers and Sisters... (the wedding party)
 - Calling for the start to the road to Calvary
 - In order to bring about the Sacraments to save and reconcile Man to God, and to one another!
- **John 2:1–11** (RSVCE) *1 On the third day there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 Jesus also was invited to the marriage, with his disciples. 3 **When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” 4 And Jesus said to her, “O woman, what have you to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6 Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.” So they took it. 9 When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.” 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him.***
 - She makes her request ONCE...
 - Jesus “SEEMS” to rebuke her...
 - She then turns to the servants IN FAITH and beckons them to “DO whatever He tells you!”

- The Good Soil of our Lady's faith has born the seed of the LIFE GIVING WORD to the world....

- **What kind of Mother does it take?**

- Imagine that for a moment... you're the mother of Jesus, standing there, looking your only Son in the eyes, knowing that HE is the Messiah, God taken on flesh from YOUR womb, and your asking Him to begin his trek to the cross where he will be beaten, mocked, tortured, nailed to the tree and slowly die by drowning, gasping for air as his lungs fill with fluids. What mother would want her son to die in such a way? What mother, knowing all of this, would help kick-start the process?
- No ordinary mother I assure you!
 - It would take a "woman" who...
 - had no attachments to sin that would cloud her reason, her ability to make the correct decision, otherwise she might be tempted to save her Son and sacrifice mankind instead.
 - Thus she would need to be immaculately conceived, created free from the stain of sin, to have TOTAL enmity with Satan.
 - She would need to be **THE "full of grace!"**
 - It would take a "woman" who was so totally dedicated to the mission of her Son,
 - which was to save mankind from their sins through HIS death on the cross, resurrection and ascension into heaven,
 - that even though a sword would pierce her heart also (c.f. Luke 2:35), she could stand at the foot of the tree,
 - tempted by Satan to cry out for her son, and yet say nothing as they raised Him up in order to draw all men to Himself (c.f. John 12).
 - Thus she would need to be the "Handmaid of the Lord!"

- **The Ancient Serpent pursues the Handmaid...**

- **Revelation 12:13–17 (RSVCE)** *13 And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had borne the male child. 14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. 15 The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. 16 But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea.*

- ALL of salvation history is coming to a pinnacle moment here in Revelation 12.

- If you read carefully you will see

- creation,
- Eden,
- Annunciation,
- nativity,
- Calvary and more, all rolled up into one passage!

- John tells us that Mary is the Queen of HEaven & Earth....

- clothed in the glory of God so that her soul will magnify the Lord, like the moon reflects the light of the sun, piercing through the darkness of the night.
- Mary here is the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15, complete enmity between her and the serpent... having no original sin, and no personal sin... having been protected by

the Grace of God, which she alone enjoys
the “fullness” of.

- Notice too that once the ancient serpent, the dragon (keep that image in mind the next time you read Genesis 3) fails to defeat her;
 - he makes war on HER offspring. Who are they? **They are the ones who KEEP the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus.**
 - Have no doubt; Jesus has given Mary to YOU to be YOUR mother too!
- Yes, it would take a “woman”,
 - like the first “woman” Eve,
 - who was created without sin
 - dedicated as the “helpmate” to the LAST Adam,
 - yet one who will, unlike Eve,
 - endure the test in order to save mankind and restore communion once again among the sons’ and daughters’ of God.
 - Knowing all of this our Lord gave her to us, to be our Mother that she might intercede for us (c.f. John 19:27),
 - to mediate the graces her Son earned for us all on the Cross.
 - Just as Solomon could not refuse the request of his mother, so too can Jesus not refuse the request of Mary... thus turning the water into wine as His first sign in John’s Gospel (c.f. John 2:7).
- **Mary the TRUE Handmaid of the Lord...**
 - Mary shows us the true nature of a saint... a warrior for Her Son!
 - To be the “Handmaid of the Lord”,
 - is to be of one heart and mind with the Lord.
 - If the Lord desires all men to be saved,
 - and saving them meant

- your Son had to die on a cross in order to
 - restore communion in the family,
 - redeem the exiled son,
 - and reenter the Garden paradise to eat of the fruit of the tree of life once again (the Holy eucharist),
 - **Then so be it.**
 - “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38)!
- **Those who keep the Father's commandments are my Mother, my brother and sisters...**
 - 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Hail Mary...
 - 4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 - Full of Grace...
 - 5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. 6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
 - The Lord is with you...
 - 7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
 - Blessed art thou among women...
 - 8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
 - And blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus...
 - 9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
 - Holy Mary, Mother of God...
 - 10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - pray for us sinners...
 - 11 “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so

men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

■ now and the hour of our death... Amen!

● **Our Lady is...**

- Interceding for you
- Standing between you and the Dragon
- Drawing you closer to her son the king...
 - Bringing you back from exile...
 - Back into the family of God

● **The disciple...**

- Seeks humility in the face of exaltation
- Mourns the loss even one soul due to sin
- Craves simplicity in an extravagant world
- Desires God's righteousness above all else
- Confounds a cruel culture with their mercy
- Radiates such purity that God image and likeness is reflected in all they do
- Where there is division... They bring unity
- Stand their ground when confronted with adversity....
Witnessing to the world for God
- Take up their cross and follow Jesus all the way to Calvary!

● **Mary, the Handmaid the Lord is first amongst Disciples... Will YOU be second???**

- Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary,
- that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection,
- implored your help,
- or sought your intercession was left unaided.
-
- Inspired with this confidence,
- we turn to you,
- O Virgins of virgins,
- our Mother.



- To you we come,
- before you we stand,
- sinful and sorrowful.
- O Mother of the Word Incarnate,
- do not despise our petitions,
- but in your mercy hear us and answer us.



- Amen.



- May Our Lady whisper our names into the ear of her son... that our hearts too can be good soil for the seed of God's word!