

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of Mercy!

Our life, our sweetness, and our hope!  
To thee do we cry, poor banished  
children of Eve, to thee do we send  
up our sighs, mourning and weeping  
in this valley, of tears.

So begins our traditional “Hail Holy Queen” prayer. Indeed, we have been banished from the Garden of Eden because of the offense of our First Parents and frequently sigh, mourn, and weep in our valley of tears,

*From Genesis: “(God) drove out (Adam); and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.”*

*Pretty discouraging stuff.....*

But wait: I’ve seen pictures of Honorable Knights of Columbus. There’s one on the wall behind me of Sir Joe Marandola, Sir Paul Tufo and Sir Hank Ingorvate. And look: THEY HAVE SWORDS!  
I say, let’s take back the Garden of Eden!

Here’s the plan. Before we make our move we analyze what went wrong with Adam and Eve and, in our own lives, try to make sure we don’t make the same mistakes.

Let’s list some of the mistakes:

**First:** Their temptation was to be like a god. That sounded pretty good to Adam and Eve. They had EVERYTHING they needed as humans but they wanted more -- insatiable ‘ego’: the Original Sin. The opposite of humility. Narcissism. So our first corrective action is to be Worthy Knights who recognize our relationship with God – listening to His word and carrying out His will. Not trying to act like His equal.

**SECOND:** God made the Garden of Eden, placed Adam in the garden and gave him a partner so that he would not be lonely. Has anyone ever noticed that Adam never once said Thank You for all the blessings of God? So let us each day remember to say “Thank you, Lord.”

**THIRD:** When Eve was asked about God’s commandment not eat of the fruit in the middle of the garden she added the prohibition “nor shall you touch it.” God never said that. Do we hear God’s guidance clearly or do we add our own distortions as Eve did, perhaps interpreting God as being even more strict at times than He really is?

We need to be silent and try to clearly discern the Voice of the Lord.

**FOURTH:** When God confronted Adam and Eve about eating the forbidden fruit, Adam threw the blame on Eve and God Himself!: “The woman You gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit from the tree.” As far as Eve, she blamed the serpent: “The serpent tricked me.”

When we screw-up let’s be honest and not blame others. Let’s just plainly admit our mistakes and errors.

**FIFTH:** When Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze they hid from Him because of their sinfulness.

But it is because of our sinfulness that we should place ourselves in the presence of God. When they were naked, Genesis teaches us “The Lord God made garments of skins for the man and his wife and clothed them.” When we feel humiliated because of our sinfulness God will clothe us to help us with our distress.

**SIXTH :** Does anyone remember Adam and Eve ever telling God they were sorry and asking forgiveness?.... Let us always remember to be contrite for our failings and to ask God for His forgiveness.

So, as Worthy Knights, with our special swords, let us go forth with the lessons learned from Adam and Eve:

- Know your true worth and at the same time be humble.
- Say thank you.
- Discern what is God's Voice and what is our distortions of God.
- Take responsibility for our own failings.
- Don't hide from God but rather let us be conscious of His Presence.
- Never forget to ask for forgiveness.

Armed with these principles, I say "Let's Return to the Garden."