

Episode 20: The Way of the Rose Part 2—

The Rosary and her Mysteries

Thursday, December 19, 2019

[music] *You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.*

Janet Conner You are not praying; you are being prayed, prayed at the speed of love. I'm Janet Conner, and I am a *Prayer Artist*. And you know who you are [laughter]? You are a member of the *Praying at the Speed of Love* community, and you have arrived in speed of love timing to a very special episode of this, my new podcast, *Praying at the Speed of Love*. This episode, #20, is so special because it is the final conversation in the first year of *Praying at the Speed of Love*.

Perhaps you know that I had a very successful six-year run with a radio show on the Unity Network called *The Soul Directed Life*. 230,000 people downloaded that show, so as you can imagine, it was a very difficult, very tear-filled decision to close a show I adored doing and that you adored listening to. But I had to do it. I had to do it because I had to create space for something new.

Now, I wasn't exactly certain what this new thing was going to be, but once I got that call in February of 2018 to be a *Prayer Artist*... it wasn't Janet that made this decision. It was *Prayer Artist* that made this decision, and *Prayer Artist* demanded that everything, everything, everything in my life give way for one topic: prayer.

Now, prayer, perhaps you've noticed, is not exactly your average conversation on the radio. And I wanted to not only talk about prayer but to dive into prayer. I wanted to have conversations with real people, real authors, real spiritual teachers about their personal prayer lives. That does not happen on the radio [laughter], and beyond that, I didn't want to just ask, as radical as that is, "Tell us about your prayer life. How were you taught to pray as a child? How do you pray today?" I wanted to then say, "Okay. Let's pray together." And that just doesn't happen on podcasts and radio shows.

And if that weren't wild enough, I am only interested in one kind of prayer and that's pre-patriarchal and post-patriarchal prayer. I'm not interested in any deep study of how our patriarchal religions have taught us to pray. We all know that.

We're finished with that. We want to go way back or way forward into pre- and post-patriarchal prayer.

And haven't we been having the best time? Haven't we been having the best time? Every single conversation changes my life, and I hope every single conversation changes yours. Just a couple of the guests have included Kahu Lāhela in Hawaii, who brought us Ho'oponopono. You want a prayer, a prayer to change your life? You listen to that conversation with Kahu Lāhela and Ho'oponopono.

Meghan Don brought us Mary Magdalene, alive, in the room. It was so thrilling that I ended up leading two prayer intensives with Meghan Don to experience Mary Magdalene, to pray as Mary Magdalene prayed.

And Rabbi Tirzah. Rabbi Tirzah lifted her prayer shawl and brought us under it to meet and experience *Shekinah*. Now, she says *Shekinah* a heck of a lot better than I do. That's the best I can do. That's your Irish, anglicized *Shekinah*. But she can say it in Hebrew, and it just sounds so sexy and spectacular.

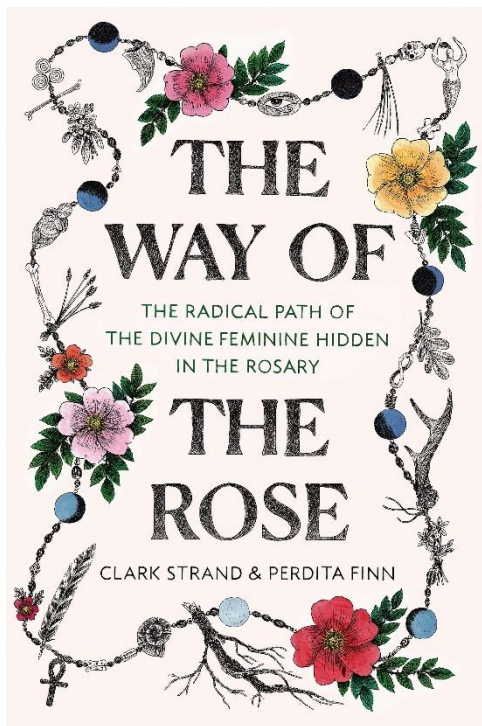
And then Mallorie Vaudoise. There was a conversation. She opened our eyes to the fact that the ancestors are not dead. They are alive. They're in the earth, and they're talking to you. And thanks to Mallorie, I began to listen to my Huguenot ancestors, and they said, "Come on, babe. Come on. Come on. You're moving to New York State."

Well, all of those conversations and more are waiting for you at janetconner.com [Podcast](#). But here we are at the end of the year, episode 20, and it's a first on a lot of levels, a celebration on a lot of levels. It's also the first double, double conversation because one conversation with Clark Strand and Perdita Finn about the rosary, *The Way of the Rose*, was not anywhere near enough.

In part one, which is available at janetconner.com [Podcast](#), we discovered that the rosary is an ancient goddess, pre-patriarchal prayer honoring the three faces of the goddess, maiden-mother-crone. Sister Mary Margaret never told me that. That was such a surprise. We learned how to pray the Hail Mary through that lens of the three faces of the goddess. Woah. How much excitement can you have? And then Clark told a story of how this whole thing happened with Our Lady appearing to him in the middle of the night during the Hour of God.

But we didn't get to the mysteries of the rosary. We didn't get to what is a novena, and so today part two of a wonderful conversation with Clark Strand, Perdita Finn, and *The Way of the Rose*. In this conversation about the ancient mysteries of the rosary, there is something waiting for you. There's some nugget of love. It's

hovering in the air right now, right now, waiting for you to open your invisible ears that you may hear what wants to be heard.



[the bowl rings]

First ring for the maiden.

[the bowl rings]

Second ring for the mother.

[the bowl rings]

Third ring for the myrrhophore, the ancient wise death crone.

Oh, welcome back, Perdita and Clark, and we're so blessed that you're joining us in the middle of your national book tour.

Perdita Finn Thank you for having us, Janet.

Clark Strand Thank you, Janet. We're so happy to be here again.

Janet Conner More to talk about, so much more to talk about. So here's where I think it would be fun to start: the very beginning of this apparition of The Lady. In *Waking Up to the Dark*, Clark, you tell the story about this apparition in detail, so I think people need *Waking Up to the Dark* as well as *The Way of the Rose*. And you talk about

this time period in the middle of the night, 3:00 to 4:00 AM, is the Hour of God. Now, this totally cracks me up because I know this dark hour. I know this every night. I'm best friends with the Hour of God.

Now, I don't get up and walk around like you do, but I am awakened almost every night. I might hear something, a phrase, an idea, an image. Lately, I'm being awakened, and this is interesting. I'm sort of seeing the future. I am watching a portion of this project I'm working on called *If I Forgave You*, which is sort of a performance, sort of a prayer, sort of a shared mystical... I don't know. There's nothing quite like it. But I know that I am being shown what I am to create, and those are my marching orders. And I write them down in the middle of the night, and the next day, I do the next step in bringing this to life.

This is some kind of mystical shared experience that heals patriarchy. I see the stage. I see the opening slides. I'm hearing the music. I mean, really, I say to Sophia, "Don't you think you should be telling the music to a musician?" But I sing it out loud as best I can and write it down, say thank you and go back to sleep.

Now, I've also read that this hour between 3:00 and 4:00, from a scientific standpoint, is when the earth's Schumann waves are at their highest, and that's somehow connected to why we all wake up between 3:00 and 4:00. I've heard that nurses call it the Hour of the Wolf because so many people die during this time period.

Perdita Finn And are born.

Janet Conner Clark, tell us more about this Hour of God.

Clark Strand Well, it's actually a two-hour period, so you could take the Hour of God and double it. It usually opens somewhere between 2:00 and 4:00 AM, but it changes with variations in the time of year like when it grows dark. The ancient rabbis said that it began six hours after sunset in winter and summer, so you can basically time it from whenever the sun sets, six hours later. Typically, people will sort of wind down for a couple of hours after the sun goes down, and people who live in cultures where there's no electrical lighting... not very many cultures like that exist today.

Certainly, in pre-modern times, people would just fuss around. Then they would go to sleep. They would sleep for four hours, and after four hours, they would wake and be awake for two hours and then go back to sleep for four. And this was the universal pattern observed by all Homo sapiens. In *Waking Up to the Dark*, I

joke that it's the closest thing we've ever had as a species to a nightly meditation retreat for every Homo sapiens on earth.

So that's the period of time, and the researchers who rediscovered this ancient Hour of God, they were stunned at the reports that people gave. They took people off electrical lighting, right, and they took a group of people off electrical lighting for like, I don't know, four weeks. And after the third week, everybody started sleeping in this same pattern of bisected sleep. But the real kicker was the fact that they told Thomas Wehr, the NIH researcher who was conducting the experiment, that they had never felt so at peace in their lives. They would wake up to this state of mind that was unlike anything they experienced during the daytime.

Later, Wehr, of course, tested the hormone levels in their bloodstream and discovered that prolactin, which is a hormone that elevates during breastfeeding and also during sleep... it's what keeps mothers calm while they're nursing, birds still while they're roosting on their nests, and bodies still while they're sleeping.

Well, most people if they wake up in the middle of the night, they fret, and they're anxious. They're worried about whether they're going to be tired the following day. But if you give yourself enough darkness on either side, you wake up to a very different state of mind because the levels of prolactin remain at sleep levels even though you're awake.

And this is doubtless the origin of that beautiful, oft quoted passage from the Song of Songs where the lover says, "I sleep, but my heart is awake." This isn't a description of a... this isn't a sort of idealized description of the life of prayer. This is an actual description of a state of mind, where the heart is awake but the mind and the body are curiously calm and tranquil. That's the Hour of God.

Janet Conner And this is thrilling for me to help me notice now, when I wake up, I love being awakened in the middle of the night. I know that's when my marching orders, that's when something new and thrilling and totally beyond Janet's comprehension... I know that whatever comes to me in the middle of the night didn't come from me.

Clark Strand Yeah. That makes sense. I really believe that after years of doing this and years of writing about it and talking to people about it, that it's almost diagnostic for the state of your soul. If you wake up in the middle of the night to a fearful, fretful, agitated state of mind, it's because you're living out of harmony with your soul. Your body is out of sync with the seasons and with the natural fluctuations of light. You're probably not living as you should, and when you begin to live well, then waking up in the middle of the night will feel like a blessing, right?

But the other thing is that if you do wake up in the middle of the night and manage to relax into it and trust it and believe that it's good and wholesome to be awake at that time and maybe say a prayer or two, it begins to change your daylight life as well. Your life begins to fall more in step with those eternal rhythms.

Perdita Finn I think though too, and I would just like to interject as the person who does not wake up in the middle of the night [laughter]. I'm a really good sleeper, and I sleep really soundly and really deeply. I don't have trouble falling asleep, and I don't have trouble waking up. And I don't wake up at 3 o'clock in the morning, and I never have. But that space of deep rest and deep intuition, and that experience—I was a nursing mother for many years—that experience, I have found through the rosary, that it's available to me any time of day or night without any effort.

And one of the things that's fascinating to me about the longer I prayed the rosary has been that I frequently will find that by the time I get to the third set of mysteries, I drop down somewhere. And it's not awake, and it's not asleep. And it's that space, and then I'll feel like a whale kind of coming up out of it to surface. But I frequently find as I'm praying the rosary I'm flooded with intuition, inspiration, imagination.

I'm not surprised psychics pray the rosary frequently before they give readings to people. It opens that portal, and it's that feeling of rest that I had as a nursing mother, rest into the seat and connection. So the truth is people often say after reading *Waking Up to the Dark*, "Oh, are all the lights off in your house?" And no. With modern people, we suddenly want to create a program for ourselves, and we don't have to.

We can relax, and we can find our way into these spaces. There are ways of finding our way into these spaces. We don't have to go off on fancy retreats or fancy workshops or change our lifestyle or quit our jobs. Our Mother is so generous with offering us this peace.

Clark Strand The rosary is really a way of cultivating the dark, right? There are two ways of doing it. You can either turn off the lights and do it the way our Paleolithic ancestors did, or you can cultivate the dark with a practice like the rosary. And the rosary, as Perdita just said, it drops you into that deep, deep place of trust. And I'm quite certain that if you tested her bloodstream when she's praying the rosary that her prolactin levels are probably going up.

Janet Conner What you describe... and you specifically said, Perdita, drop, drop. The research about the prolactin in your body is news to me, new to me, but what you are describing I know intimately as the theta brainwave state.

Perdita Finn Exactly. Yup.

Clark Strand That's right.

Janet Conner And it's a dropping, a slowing down, and I stumbled upon this when I did the original research for *Writing Down Your Soul*. And I started with James Pennebaker's research at the University of Texas in Austin. He's done 30, 35 years of research on the efficacy of writing, just plain old journaling, and it changes your mood; it reduces depression; it lowers your heart rate, all those fabulous meditative... we have a tendency to say, "Well, meditation has those benefits." Surprise! Writing has those benefits as well.

And then I looked at neurobiology with Candace Pert and that the neuropeptides are in every cell of your body. And if you're upset about something, if you're holding onto some crap in your life, if you're upset or angry, you are literally reducing the food going into your brain because your carotid artery is contracted. So when you tell your story, when you do that kind of writing—literally, who knew—your carotid artery opens, and now you've got some food in your frontal cortex. And you can actually maybe notice what's going on in the world and make some changes.

Obviously, the prolactin is another piece of this. So when you said, "Drop," which is literally your brainwaves slowing down from beta to alpha to theta, that's a dropping, then I'm... because this is like the love of my life. When I learned about theta, I was in a conversation with some consciousness coaches in New York City, and they were talking about writing and how effective writing is. And I wanted to quote them in my book, *Writing Down Your Soul*.

And they were talking so exquisitely about writing that I worked up the courage to say something I had never said out loud before, and I said, "So what does it mean when you're writing so intensely that the pen and the paper kind of become one, and you couldn't lift the pen off the paper if you wanted to? And something comes through the pen that you know, you know didn't come from you. And it's the most beautiful..." Well, anyway, there's this silence, and I thought, "Uh oh. These people think I'm crazy. And now I'm going to get an email saying, 'Don't you dare quote us in your crazy book, you crazy lady.'" And I'm trying to think, "Okay, how can I get out of this mess?" And I'm pausing to wonder, "How do you retract something like that?" And finally, they spoke.

They were just shocked, and they said, "We don't know how you've done it, Janet, but you have trained yourself to enter mystical theta." And that's what the rosary does. That's what, I think, the Hour of God is. We are dropping out of that frantic beta, get it done, judgment, worry, into this... it's the mystical brainwave. This is when you have access to creativity, and that's why I don't fight it.

If I'm awakened in the middle of the night and shown this performance, I just say, "Okay. Thank you," and then I know what I need to do in the morning. And I am having this experience now praying the rosary because this is brand new. I'm praying the rosary again for the first time in 50 years. And, yes, I'll be walking in the living room because I do it standing up and walking and ideas *pchoo, pchoo, pchoo* [laughter], and I have to rush over to my journal and write them down.

I know... not that I have had those little thingies on my head. It would be great fun to have the thingies on your head that tell you what brainwave you're in or to have your blood measured, how much prolactin is in. I don't have proof of that. But being a deep soul writer now for 22 years, I know, and I know that I know that when I pray the rosary, I'm dropping in the mystical theta.

Perdita Finn But one thing that's interesting to me about what you just said, Janet, is about the freeing of the voice and the freeing of the storytelling. Because one of the really powerful things I have found as someone who was trained in Zen meditation, between that and the rosary, is that the rosary is at its simplest a story that invites us to tell our story. And it is an invitation to storytelling and an invitation to our own voices.

I have seen people we've prayed with, and Clark has too... there was a woman who came to our circle, and she'd experienced a lot of trauma as a child. And she couldn't talk in the beginning. She couldn't tell her story. She could pray the rosary out loud, but she couldn't offer her own prayers. And then the tape came off her mouth, and then she could start to talk. And then she could tell her story.

There is a woman in our group in her late 70s who's finally telling the stories that were silenced out of her as a teenager. And—

Clark Strand More than one.

Perdita Finn More than one. And I think that, yes, you're dropping into these deep, peaceful places, but it's not a place that silences you. It's a place that frees you into imagination and voice and intimacy and conversation, so would you agree with me about that, Clark?

Clark Strand Yeah, I totally do. I mean, I think that the rosary is a story that invites us to tell our story. The rosary is a story. It's not like your average meditative or mantra

practice. Most mantra practices, right, or single mantra practices, they involve one thing you say over and over and over again, and if you look at the literature associated with them, occasionally, there are visualizations that accompany them. But there's almost never a narrative like a storyline.

The rosary has these things called decades, right? You pray an Our Father, 10 Hail Marys, and a Glory Be for each of the mysteries. And each mystery is an episode from the life of Mary. There are 15 in all, and they go in a kind of a circle, right? It begins with the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel and ends with her being crowned as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

As you pray the rosary, you find yourself inside of a woman's story, and it's a women's storytelling tradition that does not exclude men, right? Men are included in that women's storytelling tradition because the story that's being told about a woman in the rosary is basically the story of the seasons—

Perdita Finn And the earth.

Clark Strand —and the cycles of birth, growth, death, and regeneration and rebirth that are part of nature itself. So we're all included in that story. And once we find our footing inside of that story, it gives us great confidence, confidence to live with faith and with hope and with joy, and the confidence to know that we can pass through sorrow and come out the other side of it, the confidence to know that everything that happens in life fits into a larger pattern, right, that we don't ever have to feel thrown or defeated.

So it's a little bit like a spinning top. When I pray the rosary, it spins, and you spin inside of it like one of those little children's games. And it balances you. It shows you where you belong. Perdita's always saying that the rosary doesn't just go in circles, it helps us to circle in on what matters, and I think that's really true. But we do that through storytelling.

You tell Mary's story. We tell our own stories. We listen to other people's stories. We find our stability and our groundedness in relationship to ourselves to Our Lady and to one another.

Janet Conner Well, that explains a lot because I've had a pretty creative life for the last 11 years, but we're on steroids now [laughter]. It is happening so fast, and it's so beyond anything that I have done or written. But it's so beautiful that I have to say, "Yes."

Perdita Finn It's interesting. You know, Janet, a friend said to me just the other day, she said, "How do you write so much?" And I've experienced, it's like that water rushing through you that you suddenly, you're opening the dams. And you see it not just with storytelling.

We have a Facebook group, right, that's sort of anarchic, joyous community of people celebrating Our Lady. The art on there is amazing. People are making things they never thought they would make. They are telling stories. They are writing music. This is what Our Lady does. She calls forth the power of creativity from within every flower, within every tree, and from within us. That's what the beauty of the troubadour tradition is.

Janet Conner Well, that would explain why she's giving me music. And I can see the dragon. I can see the colors. I mean, I see everything, and yet, I'm not an artist. And I'm not a musician. She doesn't care. She's like [crosstalk]—

Perdita Finn No [laughter].

Janet Conner —"This is going to come through you, Janet, and it has art. And it has color, and it has a logo. And it has a performance, and it has music. Now, let's go [laughter]." And it's so much—

Clark Strand Yeah. Our Lady's answer to most statements like that, "I'm not an artist," or "I'm not a poet," or "I'm not a musician," or "I'm not a prophet," or "I'm not an activist," or whatever is usually, "You are now."

Janet Conner You are now [laughter]! That's it. This is it.

Perdita Finn But I think great artists are inspired by Our Lady. I mean, I'm a big fan of Bob Dylan, and I love watching his early interviews when people would say to him, "How do you write these songs?" And he would shrug and say, "I don't know," because he didn't know. They were pouring through him. He said, "I'm not writing them," and that irritated people. And they said he was being difficult, but he was being honest.

Janet Conner No. I know exactly that because I don't write any of my prayers. I just put my hand in motion when I can feel that one is coming, and you can feel it. I know this like aura... I don't have words for this. But I know a prayer's coming. Get paper now. So I have paper everywhere. There's paper in the kitchen. There's paper in the living room. There's paper next to the tub because you don't get to say, "Excuse me. I don't have paper right now." No. You get paper. You get it now. And then it comes out better than anything you could write.

Clark Strand I know. I know. You and Rebbe Nachman and Rebbe Noson of Breslov. Here's one patriarch you might want to actually check out. They were these Hassidic Jews who had this spontaneous prayer practice, and they would wake up in the middle of the night to do this. And they would go out into a field under the stars, and they would speak aloud to God. And a lot of Rebbe Nachman and Rebbe Noson's prayers... they would come back and write down these spontaneous

prayers they uttered, and they're just ecstatic and beautiful. They're so unlike anything you would actually find in a Jewish prayer service or in a Catholic mass.

They're like... some of them will begin, "God! God! What the hell is the matter? Why is this happening?" And it goes on from there, but then it bottoms out into some very, very beautiful, "I'm with the grasses, and the grasses are teaching me to pray. Thank you," right? So there were occasionally some people who sort of broke free and sort of found their way to the Mother, usually in the middle of the night or in the wilderness.

Janet Conner So this thing about the story leads us to this conversation I so want to have with you about the Mysteries. So as a kid, we would, after dinner, five kids in their Catholic uniforms, Mom and Dad, on your knees, say a rosary. And Mom would announce, "Okay. This is the Joyful Mysteries or the Sorrowful Mysteries or the Glorious Mysteries," and before each decade, she'd say, "Okay. It's the Annunciation," or whatever. And I didn't get it then.

I didn't get it until here I am turning 72, reading your book, what the Mysteries really are and that it is this life-death-rebirth, the joys, the sorrows, and the mystical mysteries of life. So thanks to you, there I am saying the rosary for the first time in 50 years, and the very first time I said a rosary, it was the Joyful Mysteries. Well, shoot. That's fun. I can do that. The Annunciation, the Nativity, that's great fun.

Okay. Day two [laughter]. Now, we have to get to the Sorrowful Mysteries. Now, I have a problem. I got a big problem because, as a Catholic kid, I hated that whole Easter season, Passion Week. I mean, really? You want me to focus in on how a patriarchal religion murdered, executed in the worst possible way, one human being? I cannot do this.

So there I am, standing in the living room going, "I don't know what to do," because I am not going to bring those images back into my head. So I sat down and did a little deep soul writing, and I on my own... and so I want to run this past you guys and see if other people have these experiences of sort of making your own story, your own mysteries.

I asked myself, "Well, what do the Sorrowful Mysteries mean to me? What do they represent to me? What are the horrors that I do want to see and remember and honor to heal them?" And immediately, I mean, it came just like that, that there are five Sorrowful Mysteries, and they are the crimes, the sins of our fathers, in the Old Testament committed by patriarchy.

And my understanding from reading *When God Was a Woman* is that, in general, the simplistic story of these patriarchal religions starts around 3000 BCE when these tribes, who were light-skinned and worshipped a white, male, god of light, invaded the southern countries, which were brown people who worshipped the goddess. It's a very simplistic reduction of the story, but they very quickly invaded these lands, which anthropology shows for 1500 years, there had been no weapons of any kind. So obviously, humanity is capable of living in great, great peace and love.

And consequently, I suppose it was very easy for them to invade and take over. But those were matrilineal communities where the woman was honored and the children were honored as hers. That was the name, the name of the tribe. She ran all the businesses. She had all the money. She had all the land. It was 180 degrees different from what the patriarchal religions have done for us.

And so very quickly out of my pen came five crimes. The first Sorrowful Mystery, the first crime, is theft because they took everything from us. The second one is silencing, which came up in our conversation today, preventing women's voices and men. Because patriarchy has forced them to say and do horrible things that probably deep inside they don't, or many of them don't, want to say or do.

It has prevented them, for example, from crying. I remember my son in the midst of the divorce one day. Maybe he was nine or... yeah, probably nine, and when I picked him up after school, he was very quiet. And we got close to our house and stopped to get something. And he looked at me, and he said, "Can I cry now?" "Yes, sweetheart. You can cry now."

But men have been silenced and silenced and silenced, so it isn't only women's voices. But, of course, let's just look at Dr. Ford who had the courage to use her quivering voice to gently tell the story of what really happened with Brett Kavanaugh who used his violent, screaming voice. It's just a perfect example of women being silenced.

The third crime is rape because sex under patriarchy took this exquisite, the hieros gamos language, this exquisite honoring... so sex is this worship of the goddess, and they turned it into torture and abuse and domination. And we know that this continues and continues and continues. They even now call it rape culture like that's just the way it is.

The fourth crime, the fourth Sorrowful Mystery, is greed because everything done to our physical bodies is done first to Mother Earth's body. How much can we extract out of her?

And finally—uh, these are tough—the fifth Sorrowful Mystery, the fifth crime of patriarchy, is murder. So when I say the fifth Sorrowful Mystery, I do—it's hard—but I honor the 9 million women who were executed as witches, and I'm sure I was one of them on multiple occasions. And I also consider in that the destruction of the Indigenous peoples everywhere, every Holocaust, every genocide.

Now, this is tough. I mean, thinking about one guy getting tortured to death would be a piece of cake compared... but this is what I have to do. And I got the confirmation the very first time I said these Sorrowful Mysteries of how accurate they are because I immediately got sick, and my body released and released and released. And I went, "Ho ho, okay." So this is how I say the Sorrowful Mysteries. Are you discovering that people are coming up with their own stories, their own Mysteries?

Perdita Finn Well, here's the thing. And I think I want to just take a step back for a second and just talk about the Sorrowful Mysteries as a whole in the mystery tradition a little bit and then look at specific Mysteries because I think the power of the rosary is that we are asked to bear witness with Mary Magdalene at the foot of the cross. We are not allowed to look away. We're not allowed to be what a friend of mine sometimes calls *bliss ninnies*.

We have to look at what's happening in the world, and the mystery traditions of which the rosary is a part were the Eleusinian mysteries, the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone, the mysteries of Isis and Osiris. These were deep, deep ways of connecting with the earth, and they understand that birth and death were inextricably linked. Everything that was born would die; everything that died would be reborn. And that was the mystery.

Now, how that becomes with the Christian story becomes really interesting. And I would say that these five episodes, there's frequently great teaching hidden in them. What we have to remember is that these were not being dictated by priests. They were evolving out of the needs of folk people, ordinary, illiterate people, who had practiced these older mystery traditions. And they took the Christian story, and they found something in it that was in direct line with what they'd been studying.

Clark Strand That's right. That's exactly right.

Perdita Finn And I think if we just... I don't think the Mysteries I pray are any different than the ones you pray, except they're a little bigger. And here's the thing. If we take the Sorrowful Mysteries in the Christian story and we say empire, and then we look at Christ or Jesus, and we say, "Who is the child of the mother goddess?"

Life. What happens to life under empire?" Well, there's a moment that life is in the garden still, right, and it knows everything is still okay. But something is beginning to go awry, and it's a mystery.

None of us know exactly if it was the hordes that came down... and it's looking more and more like it was even in terms of the archeological and the DNA evidence. But why did they go to the sky god? Do you know? Where is that energy? Something happens in the garden. There's Jesus in the garden. There's life in the garden.

And yet that's also personal because we have a moment in our own lives when we can feel sorrow coming, and sometimes that's not a big, public, political mystery. Sometimes it's terribly personal. We're somebody who knows our marriage is about to fall apart. We're somebody who knows our life is going to have to change.

Clark Strand Whether or not to go through cancer treatment or whatever. It could be anything that sort of prying, that shouldering of grief, that loneliness, which you have to enter the darkness.

Perdita Finn The great brilliance and genius of a mystery tradition is a mystery isn't an answer. A mystery is a mystery, and it's like a well. It's like a well you look at that's dark, and you don't know how bottomless it is. And you can drink from it, and you drink from it when you're thirsty. And you drink from it to restore your life, and you drink from the well of mystery. Sometimes that's a very personal mystery.

Clark Strand Sometimes the water is bitter. Sometimes it's the bitterness of tears and the bitterness of the sea. Yeah.

Perdita Finn So even the Second Mystery, The Scourging... now, in what I call Christian pornography, there's often a lot of delight taken in... and I would like to call it what it is, Christian pornography. But what does it mean when we take life and beat it and whip it and scourge it? Isn't that when we have plowed the fields into straight lines? What about our roads, when we cover our mother with asphalt? And yet it's not just that. It's also the physical pain that all life experiences as part of life.

We all suffer pain. Physical pain is a part of life, and for some people, that Mystery is a reality. I have a daughter with an incurable illness. Pain is part of her life. That Mystery is one she goes into really... the mystery of the body and its suffering.

Janet Conner So when you say the Sorrowful Mysteries, do you find different... it's like it's a little different every time?

Perdita Finn Every time. Every day. Every circle.

Clark Strand Yeah. We're not told... the Mysteries are a bare bones approach to imaginative contemplation or prayer, right? It invites you in. It gives you just the seed crystal, right, for an event. So we're talking about the Sorrowful Mysteries. You have the Agony in the Garden, when Jesus awaits the arrival of the Romans soldiers, certain that they will arrive and that he will be tried and executed.

Then there's the Scourging at the Pillar, right? There's the Crown of Thorns, the humiliation. There's Carrying the Cross, that burdensome following of that road that has only one end, which is the cross and The Crucifixion, which is the Fifth Mystery. But each of those episodes is an invitation to explore our own relationship to anxiety, foreboding, to humiliation, to lost, physical suffering, to moral anguish, to outrage at injustice. There're all these different things.

But I want to, again, back up just a little bit as Perdita did, and let's just look for a second at the Mysteries overall, the mystery tradition, because I think that that is important to situate them in deep time. We don't really know what the Mysteries were that our Paleolithic ancestors observed. They probably were exclusively lunar. They had some cycles that they marked.

If you go and you look at Lascaux Cave, they discovered a few years ago that on... I believe it's the summer solstice, the light shines all the way to the bottom of the cave and illuminates the wall where they were painting. One theory now is that they may have actually have been painting some of them by daylight, some of those beautiful paintings, rather than by lamplight. They might've done it during a three- or four-day period when the light would strike that. So they would seek out places to mark these celestial milestones in the solar year. But for the most part, they were relating to the seasons and the moon, so there're these moon cycles.

Once human beings have agriculture, human beings are suddenly in a very, very different world. They're in a world that is basically anthropogenic, right, centered around human beings because they're altering their environment. They're deciding when they're going to eat, when they're going to mate, right? They're not looking to nature to tell them how to live anymore. They're telling nature how they want to live. That is incredibly stressful spiritually, physically, morally. Human beings don't know how to deal with it.

And so all of these earliest cycles of mysteries with the mysteries of Isis and Osiris, the Eleusinian mysteries, they're all agriculturally-based. And they basically teach you how to live in a culture that is growing its own food. And the mythic structures all sort of evolved from that. So the mystery traditions are a way

of teaching human beings how to live in harmony with an earth that they have already begun to interact with as masters, right?

That doesn't mean that the rosary is a practice of mastery. It isn't. But it means that it gets us in touch with the primal reality of life on a planet where we are getting our food from the earth, and we have to respect the earth to live in harmony with its seasonal patterns.

Perdita Finn I would say as well that the problems in the mysteries are in the Sorrowful Mysteries of empire.

Clark Strand That's right. That's right.

Perdita Finn And it situates us. For me sometimes, I studied Zen for a while, and I treated each of the Mysteries as a quote, as a *koan*, an unsolvable paradox to work with. What do I need to understand? How do I let this...? It's not that I solve the *koan*, but the *koan* solves me. It breaks me open. And—

Clark Strand Right. You always called the Sorrowful Mysteries the Sorrows of Civilization.

Perdita Finn I call them the Sorrows of Civilization. And the Joyous Mysteries, that's when we're still being born with the animals. We're still born of the animals. The mother goddess in most other religions births a child who is part animal and part human, whether it's Horus with his hawk's head or Ganesha with his elephant head. But the baby Jesus is born with the animals but is not an animal.

Clark Strand And he's placed in a manger, which is a food trough for animals, and Mary gives birth unassisted, right, without a midwife. She's feral. She gives birth like an animal among the animals. And so we sometimes talk about the Mysteries in terms of deep time, in which case the Joyful Mysteries are that long, slow paradise that today we call the Paleolithic. The Sorrowful Mysteries are the sorrows of civilization, and the Glorious Mysteries, which we haven't gotten to yet, okay, in history, in deep history, the Glorious Mysteries are whatever comes after civilization.

Perdita Finn But I also don't want to silence anyone with an answer to the Mysteries. And like yesterday, whenever we do a *Way of the Rose* circle, certain people will share their thoughts about the Mystery for the day, and we do it sort of chaotically and anarchically with no leadership.

But yesterday, at our *Way of the Rose* circle, a woman said for The Presentation, which is when Mary brings the baby Jesus to the temple and the seers see her and say, "A sword shall pierce your heart," whatever, and she said, "I want to think how I want to present myself. Who am I? Who am I being recognized for today?"

Clark Strand [crosstalk].

Perdita Finn She just said that. And what I discover with the Mysteries is, at their simplest... we can have all this esoteric... but you know how when a group of women sit down, and one woman tells her story of giving birth, and then everybody tells their story of giving birth, or someone tells about their mother dying, and then everybody tells the story of her mother dying? That's what the Mysteries are. It's a group of women sitting down together sharing their stories for faith, for hope, for wisdom and guidance. And those stories change every day.

Janet Conner Well, I'm excited about the Glorious Mysteries because we have the opportunity to participate in that creation.

Clark Strand Our Lady hasn't given us much guidance with the Mysteries. Occasionally, she'll say a few words about the mysteries. She said once about The Nativity, she said that the thing to know about it was that it was witnessed by the animals. She wanted to focus on the animals there.

Another time, one of our members said about the Glorious Mysteries, and he was troubled by them because he says, "Once you're in the Glorious Mysteries, you're in The Ascension, and you're in the land of flying men." And Our Lady said to ask him, "Hasn't he ever dreamed he could fly?" Right? "Hasn't he ever entered into that space where he was flying in a dream?" Which is wonderful because it sort of opens up that possibility of astral travel, all kinds of visionary sorts of states, right, some of which are very transcendent.

Perdita Finn And also we're always experiencing... you talked about the crocuses earlier, and those are the Glorious Mysteries. That first crocus poking up through the ground is ascension. It has been ascending through the darkness. There it is. It did it.

Janet Conner That is exactly the image that I have because just as I changed the Sorrowful, I've changed the Joyful and the Glorious too. And it's a very fun thing to do. But yes. Just immediately, the first time I did a Glorious Mystery, I saw that this is the return of the goddess, and I saw the crocuses, which I view as the symbol of the goddess coming up, poking through the ground, going, "I'm back [laughter]."

Perdita Finn Can I tell you a secret, Janet?

Janet Conner Yes!

Perdita Finn Your ancestral grandmothers knew the Mysteries were about the return of the goddess explicitly. Because here's the really fun subversive thing: the Mysteries of the rosary rewrite the bible. And Clark—

Clark Strand They rewrite the end of the bible. That's for sure.

Perdita Finn And the beginning.

Clark Strand And the beginning.

Perdita Finn So imagine a pre-literate culture. In medieval Europe, people were only nominally Christian. Nobody read the bible, not even the priests. They didn't know how to read. They kind of, "Oh, you want us to call them Mary and Jesus? The goddess is now Mary and not Isis? Okay. We still have the same statue of Isis and Horus, but we'll change the names if that makes everybody happy." And they're still doing what they've been doing for 10,000 years in their village.

The bible says the world begins with Eve making a mistake.

Clark Strand That curses mankind or humankind.

Perdita Finn And the rosary says it begins with a woman defying patriarchal law and saying, "I can have a baby without a husband. I think I'm going to do it [laughter]. I don't care if they tell me they can stone me to death. They're not going to stone me to death. I'm doing what I want to do." That's how the rosary begins.

Janet Conner With that awareness, the Mysteries, which I poop like, "Let's just not even go there," I now... I mean, every day I mark on my moon chart, "Okay. We're doing Glorious today. We're doing Joyful today." And I love the dimension. It does. It activates a story flowing through me. It's different every time. It's just a glorious mystery.

Perdita Finn But here's another secret. You know when Jesus has that crown of thorns put on his head? Here's something hidden. They dress him in a red robe, which is the robe of the goddess, and they place in his hands a sceptre made of reeds, Ningal, the goddess Ningal. And the crown of thorns is the crown of roses that is a mockery of his worship of the goddess.

Clark Strand Yeah. The red robe, the sceptre, the crown, all are—

Perdita Finn He is being mocked for his worship of The Lady.

Janet Conner Okay. That... I didn't... that's incredible.

Clark Strand Pretty mind-blowing, isn't it? It's all there hidden in plain view.

Perdita Finn It's there! But these people knew it. Our ancestral grandmothers knew it.

Clark Strand Yeah. Because, as Perdita's saying, they were only nominally Christian. They were not literate. Most lore was folklore, right? Most wisdom was folk wisdom. Here's a perfect example of the sort of battle between the medieval... I won't say

the medieval church because that's too monolithic but the educated priests, right, and the ordinary people.

The Mysteries of the rosary begin with the Annunciation with Mary. They don't end where the New Testament ends. The New Testament ends with hellfire and damnation, with the destruction of the world, right, with the final judgment. The priests wanted the rosary to end that way. The ordinary people said, "No. We don't think so. That's not our understanding," because their understanding was basically ecological, not linear, but circular and centered around the goddess.

And so they said, "No. Our rosary ends with the Assumption of Mary into heaven, and her coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth." And so the New Testament, which is a linear, punitive story becomes in the rosary, a circular, redemptive story, right? It's ecologically-based rather than theologically-based, and so it's a very, very different way of occupying the world. It's a very different way of living one's life. It's a very different approach to the soul and the body. Everything is included. Everything is natural. Everything is held by the earth [inaudible].

Perdita Finn If you go and look at medieval pictures, go google the Coronation of Our Lady as Queen of Heaven and Earth. And Mary is depicted young, and she's always beside Jesus and not looking like his mother but looking like his bride. We can get Meghan in here to talk about Mary Magdalene and what's going on, but she's depicted as a young bride, not an old mother. The old—

Clark Strand Or she's shown holding the infant Jesus, which simply means that the story ends where it begins. We're right back at the Joyous Mysteries, right back at the Annunciation and the Nativity.

Perdita Finn So you're born, you die, and you are reborn. The ecological indigenous wisdom is not one short life to make sense of the world, but it is many lifetimes. Our Lady has said that the deepest thing we need to learn is the long story of our souls, and the rosary teaches us the long story of our souls. So many lifetimes.

Janet Conner When you wrote about that in *The Way of the Rose*, I remembered that in 2012, I took a group to some ancient Blackfeet land in Montana, and we were in an ice glacier bear cave that isn't open to the public. So we're down, down, down, down, down, and the lights were simply four or five bulbs hanging down. And I asked, "Hey, could you turn the lights off?" And sure enough, the guy went back out and turned the lights off.

Now, you're in, I mean, real dark, right, real dark. And I don't know why I did it, but I simply said to the cave, "Do you have a message for me?" And I'm just sitting there. I can't see anything, and I could hear. With the lights off, you pay

more attention, and there's like water dripping everywhere. And there's a lot of sounds.

But then, suddenly, I wasn't expecting for it. I didn't ask for it, but I heard... and that's sort of the wrong verb because I heard it in my heart. I heard it in my chest. But I clearly heard, "I am old. You are old," repeated. "I am old. You are old." And I actually thought, because Janet can be really slow to this party, "Who are you talking to? You're millions and millions of years old. I'm 65." The voice kept saying, "I am old. You are old."

So in the silence, I'm just knowing that this is going on, and I suddenly realize Janet is now saying to the rocks, "I am old. You are old." And that's the moment that I realized what it means to be an eternal soul, the long story. I am as old or older than the bear cave rocks. Now, Janet [inaudible] never come up with that under any circumstances. The bear cave had to say, "Hello, honey. By the way."

Perdita Finn That is so beautiful. That is so beautiful. And it's the message... I believe that's the message that can save us a species. The world we're going to be reborn into is the very world we've created. There are a lot of Baby Boomers out there right now who kind of have a fantasy that they can run this one out, and I want to go, "You're going to be reborn into this world."

I was just reading a beautiful book, and it was talking about in some Indigenous cultures, they'd see great-grandparents as their children, that the word for great-parent and child are the same. These are cycles that are repeated round and round again. And if we really understand that this earth is our home, now and forever, amen...

Janet Conner [crosstalk] forever. Well, and this is one more thing I really wanted to explore with you because it's having such a powerful impact on me. So in the rosary as a kid, you have to hold the crucifix at the beginning and say the Apostle's Creed. Okay, Janet's not saying the Apostle's Creed. It's the reason I left the Catholic Church—

Perdita Finn No. Nor is Perdita. Nor is anyone in our local group.

Janet Conner Exactly. So I don't know if I saw you talking about it in the Facebook group *The Way of the Rose* or if I read it in *The Way of the Rose* the book, but I decided, "I'm making up my own creed." So it came to me—it's on page 57 in the book—that this is my creed. So this is what I now say first, and [voice cracks] you can tell how I feel about it right away.

"The rosary is My body." My is in capital M, so this is Our Lady speaking. "The rosary is My body. My body is the body of the world. Your body is one with that

body." There's a mystical PhD, and then it ends with, "So, honey. What cause could there be for fear [laughter]?"

So I say it every time, okay, as I'm holding the rosary. Okay. The rosary is her body. Okay. Let's just try to get this in my head. And furthermore, "My body, the rosary, is the body of the world." I mean, you can't linearly try to make any sense out of this. And then, the big finish, "And guess what? Your body is part of that body." So this is my creed, and I am very grateful to Our Lady who gave it to you, Clark, right?

Clark Strand Yes.

Perdita Finn I will add, Janet, it's also my creed that I say to myself. But in our groups, we leave a creed-like space for everybody to say whatever they want to themselves. The Creed was actually added to the rosary by the church fathers, and it was a way of kind of putting a lock on the garden gate about who gets to get in and who doesn't.

Clark Strand Yeah. The rosary was originally a devotional practice that just involved reciting Hail Marys in the presence of a statue usually. People would re-enact the Annunciation. They would say, "Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee." In the beginning, it was just that prayer, so it was complete Mary and devotion.

Later, the Our Fathers were added on. The rosary assumed a shape that embodied all kinds of alchemical and Pagan wisdom and the mystery traditions and all that. It became very rich and full. Right about the time it reached the peak of its power, right, and the—

Perdita Finn Taking off. Everyone's praying it.

Clark Strand —taking off. Everybody's praying it. It suddenly got real, real weight, and it's become a kind of a church within the church with the little old grandmothers who are saying it in the back of the church while the priest drones on and on in Latin, right? It's its own animal, its own thing. It's like an ancient form of goddess worship smuggled into the Catholic Church.

Right about that time, the church suddenly decides, "Uh no. Wait a minute. We've got to say The Creed at the beginning of this thing," right? Because they're trying to put a handle on it, literally, to get a handle on it, to get some control over it. But in the beginning, there was no Creed, and it was not what they call a Christological prayer. It was a Mary and devotion, plain and simple.

Perdita Finn But if you go back to, "My body is the body of the world," which Our Lady said... that was one of her very earliest teachings on the rosary to Clark.

- Clark Strand Her first teaching on the rosary. Very first.
- Perdita Finn The first teaching on the rosary. And she said, "You're going to write a big book about the rosary, but this is everything." There's a lot to say about the rosary, but if you can really get inside of those four lines, that's enough.
- Clark Strand Yeah. She said, "Everything else I will say to you..." she wasn't just talking about the rosary. She was talking about everything. "Everything else I will say to you will just be an elaboration on those four lines but that contains everything."
- Janet Conner Well, I sense that I could say that creed every day for the rest of my life and not even slightly [crosstalk]—
- Clark Strand Honestly, Janet, I think it's really like a spell. I mean, as you said, you can't really... I've tried and tried to follow the linearity of it, and are you, Our Lady, saying the words to you, your body? Or is Our Lady speaking to you? The words are coming out of your mouth? The whole thing, it breaks down walls inside of the mind, right? It breaks down the barrier between ourselves and the earth, and the earth and Our Lady, and the earth and the cosmos.
- I mean, by the time you get to the point where it says, "Your body is one with that body, your soul," you go, "I get it. I mean, kind of. I don't really get it." But you can feel it, right? It has a mantra-like effect.
- Perdita Finn And also we've been so frightened of bodies, particularly women's bodies and the body of the earth. I think fear is a great, great danger, and Our Lady is trying to ease our fears. Because when the fear gets eased... if we look at the world today, the most frightening people are the most fearful.
- Janet Conner Well, and that sentence, that last one, it always makes me laugh like, "Okay. I'm trying to figure out this, 'The rosary's my body.'" And then, I can feel her going, "So, honey. What cause is there for fear? Let's get going." And on that step, that's when I take my first step, and I'm happy [crosstalk]—
- Clark Strand You're on the path.
- Perdita Finn And now we can play.
- Janet Conner And now we can play together.
- Perdita Finn And let's start playing.
- Janet Conner So, Clark, you said something about the old ladies in the church, in the back of the church while the priest is doing his thing in Latin. They're in the back doing the real devotion. Well, my grandmother, Irish, dower, not a happy, drinking Irish but unhappy, dower Irish. And we had to live—

Clark Strand Somebody had to be dower with all that drinking [laughter].

Janet Conner I think there's like happy Irish and then there's meh, uh, meh.

Perdita Finn Coming from a large Irish family, we could have a whole nother episode in conversation about that.

Janet Conner So she was serious. Let's put it that way. And we had to live... my mother is her first of seven, and we were the ones assigned to live on the second floor of this apartment building that my grandparents built. So, okay, like it or not, this is where we're living. Every single afternoon, which of course coordinated with coming home from school, 3 o'clock in the afternoon, she said her novena. Unless a listener was raised Catholic, right now, they're going, "A wha? A who?" Just hang in there. Listen to this wild story.

Okay, so five kids, and we're told to shut up. "You must be quiet because your grandmother is saying her novena." So consequently, just like I'd never thought I'd ever say a rosary again, the novena? Huh. Please, no. Not going to touch it. And then you two fools come along [laughter], and on one of your Sunday videos, you're talking about a novena. And I almost didn't listen. I went, "Eh, eh, novenas, eh." But I kept listening, and I've said my first novena in my life [laughter].

It's all your fault, and you cannot have more fun. You cannot have more fun than to put... and it's not asking because I don't give a shit about asking, like, "I want this and I want this and I want this," that treating the universe like it's your ATM machine. "Uh, give me this. Give me this." I have no patience for that.

But when you described the novena as a sacred heart's desire—what is your heart's greatest desire—I went, "Oh, mm, oh. Shit. Okay. Um, uh, I know what it is," because I've been saying this prayer now all year. And this is scary to put out on public radio, but here you go.

I know that in this last two decades of my life that my job as a *Prayer Artist* is to transmute prayer. That's what this show is all about, that we are going to completely change prayer from this tiny box the patriarchy has stuck it in into something huge and magnificent and glorious. You can see why I'm so excited about the rosary. Well, I got a divorce in '97. I haven't had so much as a date since... [laughter].

Perdita Finn Oh, Janet.

Janet Conner It's scary to say. But I know I can't do this alone. I know that I am to transmute prayer in partnership with my beloved, and I say this prayer every day. So there you are talking about a novena. I went, "Ah, sh-- Okay. Okay." So it was so scary.

I went, "Okay. My heart's sacred desire is to meet and start working with my *Prayer Artist* husband." So [crosstalk] novena?

Clark Strand I hope he's listening to this show right now.

Perdita Finn I do too.

Clark Strand I hope he's listening to this right now.

Perdita Finn Well, here's the thing. I mean, Janet, this makes me so happy I want to cry. And I mean, there's so much I want to say here to you, and the first is that Our Lady just revels in love. And she once said to someone, a woman who was praying for love and who'd been through a really rough marriage and divorce and the woman started dating, and she said, "Do I have to... what if I don't like this guy?" And Our Lady said to her, "It's a butterfly. I'll send another butterfly. I got plenty of butterflies."

Clark Strand Don't worry.

Perdita Finn You pick the one you like.

Clark Strand Yeah. My job is to send the butterflies; your job is to pick the one you want, right?

Perdita Finn And to know what you want. And then she said, "You guys are so easy, and I love being a matchmaker." She said, "Now, fireflies are hard, but you are easy [laughter]."

Clark Strand She said, "People imagine that fireflies will be easy, but fireflies are actually quite difficult to match." It's what she said [laughter]. I know.

Perdita Finn And then she said the whole world is about finding soulmates for everybody. She's a love goddess, and if you want to have another conversation, I could tell you miracle stories for the next... if someone gets serious about praying a novena for love, Our Lady gets serious.

Clark Strand Man. [crosstalk].

Janet Conner Well, I did the first half. So if you [inaudible] the listeners, so the first half is, it's to place the request. Okay. So you know what I do? This is so scary to talk about publicly. But you both completely changed my life, and the rosary has changed my life. So I'm holding it for the first time in my living room. I say the creed. "Okay. The rosary is my body." And I say my heart's desire. Then as I take my first step, I reach out with my left hand, and I've been holding his hand. We've been praying it together.

Clark Strand Oh. Very good. Excellent. Excellent.

Janet Conner So the first half is the request, and then the second half is gratitude. So I'm in the second half now. And so I turn to him, and we're having chats about how this rosary is going. But would you give everybody... because unless they were raised Catholic, they have no idea what we're talking about.

Clark Strand Yeah. Well, I'll explain part of it, and then Perdita will take over and explain another part that she discovered, an aspect of the novena which I hadn't seen. But the novena we're talking about here is actually six nine-day "classic rosary" novenas.

Perdita Finn Can I explain just the novena the word first? Just to start and then you—

Clark Strand Yeah. It's nine. Yeah.

Perdita Finn Yeah. Novena means nine, and nine is a very sacred number in the old mystery traditions. And it's three times three, so novena just is the Latin word for nine. And if we're playing around with magic, it's three times three, and a lot of the old mystery traditions had nine day celebrations. The other thing you often find in early traditions is that there are nine sacred mothers. You find it among the ancient peoples of Colombia, Iceland, India.

Why nine mothers? Why are the nine mothers sacred? Why the nine muses in Greece? Why not just one mother, but nine mothers? There's a celebration to Durga that honors the nine mothers. Well, we're pregnant for nine months. But it's very much about diversity and about multiplicity, and it's not one mother to rule them all. Suddenly, there are a lot of mothers. Sometimes you need a different momma than your own. But, anyway, so novena means nine.

Clark will tell you about what we pray at *Way of the Rose*. We pray actually what's called a 54 day rosary novena, which is $3 \times 3 \times 3$, which is 27 plus $3 \times 3 \times 3$, which is 27. So it's this triple goddess prayer, and Clark will tell you why we pray it.

Clark Strand Well, Janet, another little wrinkle, a little wink by Our Lady. There was this guy in the 19th Century in Italy near Pompeii named Bartolo Longo, and he was, I think, a self-described "Satanist." I think what he really was, he was kind of a Pagan, right? He was converted because he witnessed an apparition of Our Lady of Pompeii in a very remote area near where Vesuvius erupted. And later, people discovered that the site where the apparition took place were actually the ruins of an ancient temple to the goddess, okay?

And she said, "I would like you to pray this special novena over 54 days. And in the first half of the novena, you pray for something, and in the last half," the second set of three nines, right, for 27 days, "You pray in thanksgiving whether or not your petition has been answered," right? So he started praying this novena, taught other people about it, and built a basilica to Our Lady of Pompeii where her image is enshrined.

Lo and behold, this little girl who hears this story, she's suffering from, I think, four different, separate, incurable illnesses, and she prays the nine day novena with her family to be cured. She isn't cured, and so she's complaining to Our Lady. She says, "I prayed for nine days and haven't been cured." Our Lady of Pompeii appears in an apparition to her at the foot of her bed and said, "Yeah. Keep going. Don't stop. Pray two more in petition, and then pray three more nine days, right, in thanksgiving, and you'll be cured." And, in fact she was.

This set off a domino effect across the world, and within 10 or 15 years, people were praying the 54 day novena for their heart's desire all across the world. It swept through the Catholic world faster than any novena in history, and it became the single most popular rosary devotion in the world. So that's what we do on *Way of the Rose*. We had this rolling, 54 day novena where we pray for our heart's desire.

Perdita Finn But let me talk about the artistry of prayer a little bit because we do treat prayer like a vending machine in our culture. Or what I hate is the expression, "Thoughts and prayers," like prayer is less than a thought. It doesn't take any effort. It doesn't take any commitment. And when I tell someone I'm going to pray to them, I'm going to do a rosary for you. I'm going to say 10 Memorares for you. We're going to get some skin in the game, and here's the skin in the game we get with the novena.

The novena sits inside of two moon cycles. I call it two moons, one prayer. The first day, which is the sort of day zero, day one, it's before the novena. What am I going to pray for? What is my heart's desire? Then I ask for that thing for 27 days, and as you said, it can be very, very scary to ask for what we want. It can be very, very scary to admit what we want. Sometimes people have to pray novenas for four or five years to just get to the point where they can admit what they want.

But no matter what, the second half of the novena, we say thank you. And that's where the real art... that's an artistic moment for prayer, when you're saying thank you and it hasn't happened yet. Now, Our Lady has said that... she gives a lot of advice about prayer, and our next book is going to be about the novena called *Two Moons, One Prayer* because here's the thing.

The way I look at it is our heart's desire's like a mountain, right? There's a mountain there, and we sort of know what's at the top. We sort of know we want to get to the top. We sort of know we want to climb this mountain. But each novena's like a footstep on that mountain.

So a woman prayed for her heart's desire and her soulmate last month, and then she realized, "I need to pray for clarity about what I want and how to do this." And then another woman I know praying for her soulmate said, "I realize I have to pray for vulnerability, and I have to be open to another person." Another person said, "Oh, I have to pray for the courage to get on the dating app."

I mean, I will be honest [laughter]. I got you. Now, here we go. Here's a rosary miracle. Our daughter, our daughter went on 27 Tinder dates, all right? I'm going to out her. Then she decided—

Clark Strand 27 first Tinder dates.

Perdita Finn 27 first—

Clark Strand 27 separate Tinder dates. Separate dates.

Perdita Finn —Tinder dates. Most of them under 20 minutes. She's very discerning and speedy.

Clark Strand Well, she knew what she wanted.

Perdita Finn She knew what she wanted. So then she decided, "All right. I'll pray a novena about it." Three days later, she went on 28th Tinder date.

Clark Strand Yeah. The 28th day. That's when you start saying, "Thank you."

Perdita Finn And he's still in her life. But, yeah, we learned to say... but then we had another woman who prayed, and she said, "I'm not going, Lady, on any dating apps. I've got to meet this person naturally and organically." Her dentist asked her out on a date [laughter].

Clark Strand And they're living together and engaged.

Perdita Finn And they're engaged. But here's the kicker. You get your heart's desire, and then the real prayer artistry starts. Because—

Clark Strand Yeah, yeah. You get your soulmate, and then you go, "Holy shit. I have to learn how to have a soulmate," right?

Perdita Finn Do we live together? Do we not live together? What about their family? Oh my god, what about my family [laughter]? I mean, prayer leads to prayer leads to prayer. There's just more prayer. It doesn't stop. Or I've seen people pray for

something, and it happens. And it changes their lives so much, they get terrified. You spoke about the changes that have occurred for you in starting this show and the courage to step into that radical change. And when we begin to pray, we're also praying for that kind of radical change.

Clark Strand We have a series of slogans on our *Way of the Rose* group on Facebook. We say, "No rosary police," or, "Make it work for you," things like that. A lot of them are like the AA slogans like, "Live and let live," "One day at a time." We just got a new one. A couple of weeks ago, one of our members said, "If you don't want to change, don't pray."

Janet Conner Amen.

Perdita Finn And a-women [laughter].

Janet Conner If you don't want to change, don't pray.

Perdita Finn Well, Janet, I know what I'm praying for for you now.

Clark Strand Yeah. You've made it very simple.

Perdita Finn But now I can also pray for you. And when people give voice to their desires and to their heart's desire... and those heart's desires are, what do people want? They want love. They want community. They want meaning. They want purpose. They want healing. When I hear and sit and listen to people's prayers, it breaks my own heart open.

Clark Strand Yeah. It's effortless to pray for somebody who is asking for their heart's desire. Yeah.

Perdita Finn When someone is praying for themselves, you can pray for them. So we're all listening on this show, we're all praying for Janet [laughter].

Clark Strand All right, Lady. You heard it. You heard it here.

Janet Conner Well, I've been saying it. Now, it's times 10,000 that *The Way of the Rose* will change your life. *The Way of the Rose* and—

Clark Strand We're going to share this podcast with our 3500 and growing members on *Way of the Rose*, I'm just saying, on which I think there are quite a few men.

Janet Conner Well, I think you just bypassed having to get on a dating app for me, so thank you very much.

Perdita Finn We really should come up with Our Lady's dating app, you know? People devoted to the goddess. Someone out there who's ready to do it.

Clark Strand Yeah. That's right.

Janet Conner That's a very adorable [crosstalk].

Clark Strand You're going to have to screen the men though because there may be some guys who want to game that. So be careful. You have to be careful.

Janet Conner Everybody's welcome. What did Lin-Manuel tell us? Love is love is love is love is love. There's a prayer.

Perdita Finn That is. And I think it's like anything. The idea that we don't want love and that everybody doesn't want it is... and that the fireflies don't want it, and the tree... and look at it. If we begin to reclaim love in our own lives, we can let the earth begin to reclaim the love it needs in order to re-green. These are old fertility prayers.

Clark Strand And the rosary is a very tactile, touchy, loving sort of prayer. We linger on the beads. We touch them. We hold them. We fondle them like we're touching our mother's hair. It's like a nursing baby sometimes. It's very primal. But Our Lady says in those first words she uttered about the rosary, she says the word "body" four times.

And she doesn't want our bodies to be lonely. She doesn't want our souls or spirits to be lonely, but she wants to bring bodies together. She wants to re-green the earth and spread joy and touch and communion and love and kindness, right? She wants us to feel connected and joined together, right? She wants that for us. That seems very clear.

Janet Conner And it's astonishing that all of that is in a prayer that takes 18, 20 minutes to say. It's so powerful. The level of creativity that's coming through me having just read the book and just started praying really takes my breath away. And, of course, when my sweetheart shows up, that's going to take my breath away too.

But I've been letting him know, "Now, you know, we have a lot of work to do. We are transmuting prayer in partnership, so you'd better show up pretty soon because I have these performances to create and books to write." So thank you—

Clark Strand So you're offering him a lot. The hieros gamos is a lot of fun.

Perdita Finn The hieros gamos is the sacred marriage, and when we pray the rosary, we are re-enacting the sacred marriage. It's alchemy. It's sun and moonlight, male and female. It's the fathers and the mothers. Now, there're more mammas, and the mammas are in charge [laughter]. But they're mamas and papas.

Clark Strand You must have pretty strong papas in that prayer.

Perdita Finn It takes strong papas to be with strong women.

Clark Strand Yeah. But you're right. Patriarchy has somehow managed to convince us that the ratio should be 10 paters for every mater, but the rosary tells a different story. There are 10 Hail Marys for every Our Father, so it's pretty obvious whose prayer it is.

Janet Conner This conversation is such an extraordinary gift, part two. Obviously, I think you're right. A conversation about love, because this is such a huge topic for everybody, might be very fun in 2020.

Clark Strand [crosstalk].

Janet Conner So just as I had to have more Clark and Perdita on *Praying at the Speed of Love*, I have such an extraordinary gift and announcement to make to everyone listening to *Praying at the Speed of Love*. I fell so in love with this book and so in love with them that I asked them if they would lead a prayer intensive on the rosary, *The Way of the Rose*, in 2020, and of course they said, "Yes."

And so I hope you're all getting my newsletter, the *Sunday Notes from the Field*. If not, be sure to subscribe at my website, janetconner.com, so that you know because this is going to fill, and it's going to fill really, really fast. We will be together for four Mondays in March for *The Way of the Rose*.

And more presents. There's going to be a Prayer Bag, of course, for Prayer Bag #20. I hope you opened Prayer Bag #19 with a magnificent drawings by the artist Will Lytle, the chapter of the book, "Is Mary real?" And for episode 20, I've asked their publisher if we could have the chapter on the Mysteries. It's called "Mystery," and when you click on Prayer Bag #20, you'll get that excerpt. Of course, there'll be transcripts, wild fun transcript.

And so do you have a parting thought, a kiss that you want to give us as we close conversation #20?

Perdita Finn I just want to invite everybody to honor their heart's desire, that your joy matters.

Janet Conner Okay. I'm going to try not to cry upon hearing that as I give you my small gift. When I was awakened in the Hour of God on Sunday February 25th of 2018, clearly hearing in my left ear, "*Prayer Artist*. What cause could there be for fear? Sure. You're going to be a *Prayer Artist*, Janet [laughter]." I was terrified. Even in the middle of the night as I rolled over and wrote it on the yellow pad of paper in the dark, my stomach went, "Heh heh, uhh, uh huh, uh huh," because there is no such [inaudible]. What do you mean a *Prayer Artist*? And that word artist, I mean, that is huge.

So the next morning in deep soul writing, I started a conversation with Beloved Vibration of Sophia!, the name of the Divine Feminine for me. And with tears pouring off my cheeks, I said in writing, "I don't know what this means. I don't know what this means. But I know it changes everything, and I'm scared." But then I wrote, "But if you want me to be your *Prayer Artist*, I will be your *Prayer Artist*."

Immediately, the first prayer came through, so this is the first prayer as a *Prayer Artist*, and it's called—I think it's perfect for the rosary—it's called "Sometimes I Pray." Well, I can't see it when I'm crying, so [laughter].

"Sometimes I Pray"

*Sometimes I pray with you
Side by side, body to body, heat to heat
Our prayers mingling like smoke rising into the sky
Going who knows where?*

*Sometimes I pray for you
Holding you up to the Queen of Love
Asking that you be cleansed, purified and transmuted
Into a living pathway of love*

*Sometimes I pray beside you
Not knowing who you are or what you're praying
Or where or when or even how
But praying beside you anyway*

*Two hearts that might never meet
But recognize one another somehow*

*Sometimes I pray around you
Circling your pain, circling your confusion, circling your anger and your sobs
I chant mysterious songs
I sway to secret beats
Trusting the words and the rhythm to wrap you in their sacred healing cloth*

*I hope the colors penetrate your skin
I hope the sounds massage your aching heart
Maybe nothing happens, maybe everything happens
I don't know
But I pray around you anyway*

*Sometimes I pray in you
I'm not sure how this happens
When did I enter your heart?
When did you enter mine?*

*But sometimes I am in you and you are in me
and together we pray a prayer neither of us knew before—
a prayer we might never be able to replicate again*

*It's the moment, this moment
and in this moment we are one spirit, you and I—
one heart, one being, remembering who we really are*

*Sometimes my prayers are potent
Sometimes my prayers are dust
Sometimes my prayers are fearless
Sometimes just whimpers in the night
Sometimes they dissolve into weeping
Sometimes they morph into song
Sometimes they send me dancing
Sometimes they cut me cold*

*Sometimes I know I'm praying
Often I do not*

*Is this a prayer?
Or is this a life?
Or are they the same thing?*

Clark Strand Wow.

Perdita Finn Oh, Janet. Thank you.

Clark Strand Yeah. I'm really stunned, Janet. That was really wonderful.

Perdita Finn Your poems are so beautiful.

Clark Strand They're prayers.

Perdita Finn I know. They're poems and prayers. They're really—

Clark Strand Yeah. Well, they're something before prayer or [crosstalk]. Yeah.

Perdita Finn I hope you'll do a book of them.

Janet Conner I promised. But you know what I heard? I heard this in a whole new way. This is the rosary. This is the rosary.

Clark Strand It is. It is.

Janet Conner And I got this prayer before I knew you or read the book. That's proof that the rosary is alive, has always been alive, and will always be alive. I was praying the rosary before I knew I was praying the rosary [laughter].

Clark Strand Thank you so much, Janet.

Perdita Finn Thank you, Janet.

T. Frantzich This conversation in the mystic with *Prayer Artist* Janet Conner has been rated L.

[music] *You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.*