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To submit a paper for consideration, please first make sure that all personal references are stripped from the text and file properties, then email the document in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx) or in rich-text format (.rtf) to ***submissions@internationalmarian.com***. To ensure a smooth editorial process, please include a 250-350 word abstract at the beginning of the article, and be sure that formatting follows Chicago style. *Ecce Mater Tua* practices blind review. Submissions are evaluated anonymously by members of the editorial board and other scholars with appropriate expertise. Name, affiliation, and contact information should be included on a separate page apart from the submission. Please also submit a cover letter briefly describing the significance of the contribution. Please contact the associate editor Kevin Clarke at the same email address if you are interested in participating in the advisory board.

We welcome scholarly contributions from all topics in Mariology, including but not limited to Marian doctrine, Mary in Scripture and the writings of the Fathers, Marian piety and devotion, Mary in the liturgy, Mary in the papal magisterium. Topics in Marian mediation are especially welcome.

Quotations of the Bible should use the RSV-CE, unless the essay necessitates the use of another version. Please include five keywords with your submission (e.g., mariology, perpetual virginity, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, Pope Pius IX). If an article or book review is accepted for publication, authors must verify that the piece conforms to style instructions. Greek and Hebrew do not need to be transliterated, but may be submitted in Unicode format, and the author should attend to making sure that words are spelled correctly with correct diacritical marks.

Book Reviews:

Ecce Mater Tua does not accept unsolicited book reviews. Publishers interested in having titles reviewed in this journal should contact the editors at the email address above.

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International Marian Association Letter to Cardinal Mueller

31 May 2017

Eminence, Gerhard Cardinal Müller
Prefect, Congregation for the Doctrine on Faith
Piazza del S. Uffizio, 11
00193 Roma, Italy

Your Eminence:

We, Executive Members of the *International Marian Association*, which constitutes over 100 theologians, cardinals, bishops, clergy, religious and lay leaders from 5 continents, wish to, first of all, thank you for the many excellent and courageous articulations and defenses of our holy Catholic Faith, as contained in your recently released, *The Cardinal Müller Report*. At the same time, we are obliged to express to you our grave concern regarding your comment from the text when you state: “(for example, the Church ... does not call her [Mary] “co-redeemer,” because the only Redeemer is Christ, and she herself has been redeemed *sublimiore modo*, as Lumen Gentium [n. 53] says, and serves this redemption wrought exclusively by Christ... (p. 133). You unfortunately refer to this term as an example of false exaggeration: “falsely exaggerating *per excessum*, attributing to the Virgin what is not attributable to her” (Ibid.).

Your Eminence, in making this statement, albeit as a private theologian since a public interview carries no authoritative or magisterial status, you have publicly stated: 1) a theologically and historically erroneous position, since *the Church undeniably has and does call Mary a co-redeemer*; and 2) a position which, in itself, *materially dissents* from the repeated and authoritative teachings of the Papal Magisterium, the historical teachings from your own Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith (Holy Office) and other Vatican Congregations; the pre- and post-conciliar teachings of the Magisterium as expressed through numerous cardinals, bishops and national episcopal conferences; teachings of the broader Church, inclusive of multiple canonized saints and blessed who all do, in fact, assent to and theologically expand upon the authentic Magisterial teachings of the Church concerning Mary as a co-redeemer.

For *clear and undeniable manifestations of the Church's repeated teachings of the Papal Magisterium on the doctrine of Marian Coredemption and uses of the term, "Co-redemptrix,"* we cite the following examples:

a. The pontificate of Pope St. Pius X, during which the Congregation of Rites approved a prayer including "Co-redemptrix" (May 13, 1908, ASS, 1, 1908, p. 409); and the Holy Office granting indulgences to prayers calling Mary "Co-redemptrix" (AAS 5, 1913, p. 364; AAS 6, 1914, p. 108).

b. The pontificate of Pope Benedict XV, where he teaches in his 1918 apostolic letter, *Inter Sodalicia*: "we may rightly say that Mary redeemed the human together with Christ" (AAS 10, p. 181-2).

c. The pontificate of Pius XI, where, on three separate occasions, *Pius XI explicitly uses the term, "Co-redemptrix,"* and on one occasion defends the Co-redemptrix title as theologically legitimate in light of Our Lady's unique role in the Incarnation and the Redemption (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933; *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 25, 1934, p. 1; *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 29-30, 1935, p. 1).

d. The pontificate of Pius XII, who without using the term, teaches the doctrine of Marian Coredemption (*Mystici Corporis*, 1943, AAS, 35, 1943, p. 247; May 13, 1946, AAS, 38, p. 266; Encyclical, *Ad Caeli Reginam*, AAS 46, 1954, p. 635).

e. Explicit doctrinal treatment of Marian Coredemption in the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 58; 61; Also note *prae-notanda* reference of *Coredemptrix* term as being "absolutely true in itself" (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 99).

f. The pontificate of Pope St. John Paul II, during which *Pope St. John Paul II explicitly uses the Co-redemptrix term on at least 6 different occasions* (cf. *Allocution to the Sick, September 8, 1982, Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol 3, 1982, 404; General Audience, December 10, 1982, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Dec. 18, 1982, p. 2; General Audience, Nov. 4, 1984, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Nov. 12, 1984, p. 1; *Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Alborada*, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., March 11, 1985; World Youth Day Allocution, May 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 9, 1985, p. 12; Allocution to the Volunteers for the Sick at Lourdes, March 24, 1990, *Insegnamenti*, XIII/1, 1990, 743:1; *Allocution on Sixth Centenary Canonization of St. Brigid of Sweden*, October 6, 1991, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., October 14, 1991, p. 4.).

g. Pope St. John Paul II repeatedly teaches Mary's *active role* in the obtaining of the grace of Redemption with and under Jesus Christ, for example:

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavor to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, cooperated in the event itself and in the role of mother; thus her cooperation embraces the whole of Christ's saving work. She alone was associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all mankind. In union with Christ and in submission to him, *she collaborated in obtaining the graces of salvation for all humanity* (Pope St. John Paul II, "Cooperator in the Redemption" Audience, April 7, 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, p. 7; cf. also *Salvific Doloris*, 1984 n. 25; Papal Audience, April 2, 1997 Papal Audience, October 25, 1995).

For Cardinals, Bishops, and Bishop Conferences as an authentic collegial manifestation of the Church's Magisterium, who "call Mary a co-redeemer" and/or taught Marian Coredemption, we cite:

a. 190 cardinals and bishops from 1900 to 1950 who explicitly taught the doctrine that Mary was the "Coredemptrix of the human race" (Carol, *De Coredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, *Civitas Vaticana*, 1950, p. 599).

b. 309 cardinals and bishops from 1900 to 1950 who approved prayers or teachings of Marian Coredemption (Carol, *De Coredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, 619.).

c. March, 1943 Dutch Bishops Conference Consecration, which consecrated the Netherlands to Mary as "Co-redemptrix."

d. November 26, 1951 Formal Petition of Cardinal Arteaga y Betancourt and entire Hierarchy of Cuba for the Dogmatic Definition of Marian Coredemption

e. Dec. 8, 1959 –Marian Coredemption universally accepted as "certa et communissima doctrina" Fr. C. Balic, O.F.M., Advisor to Holy Office, Vatican II Mariological Peritis, major theological contributor to *Lumen Gentium*, Ch. 8; and Founder and President of the International Marian Pontifical Academy, Acta, 1959 Lourdes Mariological Congress: *Cooperatio B. V. Mariae Et Ecclesiae Ad Christi Redemptionem*, Vol. IV, *Praefatio*, p. VII:

Admissa autem ab omnibus tamquam certa et communissima doctrina, beatissimam Virginem prorsus singularem et unicum locum tenere in oeconomia redemptionis, quippe quae sensu

vero, reali, proprio, cooperate sit ad nostrum redemptionem obiectivam, et nunc e caelo cooperetur in applicandis fructibus istius redemptionis, ulterius ipsamet natura istius cooperationis perscrutata est tum ad mentem traditionis christianae, tum rationis theologiae et Magisterii ecclesiastici.

f. 57 Post-conciliar Cardinals (*inclusive of 2 Papal theologians*) who have specifically taught the doctrinal role of Mary as a “Co-redemptrix” and/or supported the Co-redemptrix title: José Francisco Cardinal Robles Ortega, Ernesto Cardinal Corripio Ahumada, Juan Cardinal Carlos Aramburu, Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns, Luis Cardinal Aponte Martínez, Miguel Cardinal Obando Bravo, Guiseppe Cardinal Caprio, John Cardinal Carberry, M. Luigi Cardinal Ciappi, Albert Cardinal Decourtray, Bernardino Echeverría Ruiz, Vincenzo Cardinal Fagiolo, Jose Cardinal Freire Falcao, Juan Francisco Cardinal Fresno, Edouard Cardinal Gagnon, Jozef Cardinal Glemp, Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër, Henryk Roman Cardinal Gulbinowicz, Franjo Cardinal Kuharic, José Alí Cardinal Lebrún Moratinos, Cardinal Lyázuri Ricketts, Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger, Emmanuel Cardinal Nsubuga, John Cardinal O’Connor, Silvio Cardinal Oddi, Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga, Antony Cardinal Padiyara, Opilio Cardinal Rossi, Pietro Cardinal Palazzini, Raúl Francisco Cardinal Primatesta, Antonio Cardinal Ribeiro, Aurelio Cardinal Sabattani, Juan Cardinal Sandoval Iníguez, Alexyre Cardinal José María dos Santos, Jaime Cardinal Sin, Alphonse Cardinal Stickler, Joseph Cardinal Satowaki, Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Adolfo Antonio Cardinal Suárez Rivera, Christian Cardinal Tumi, Paulos Cardinal Tzadua, Corrado Cardinal Ursi, Augusto Cardinal Vargas Alzamora, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Aloíso Lorscheider, Darío Catrillón Hoyos, Juan Landázuri Ricketts, Antonio José González Zumárraga, Joao Antonio da Silva Sariva, Geraldo Majella Agnelo; Georges Cardinal Cottier

g. 573 Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops from 1993 to 2017 who have petitioned the Holy See for the solemn definition of Mary as “Co-redemptrix” (see Attachment A)

From Canonized Saints and Blesseds of the 20 and 21st century who have explicitly “called Mary a co-redeemer,” we cite: Bl. Bartolo Longo; Bl. Luigi Orione; Bl. Idlephonse Cardinal Schuster; Bl. James Alberione; St. Gemma Galgani; St. Francis Xavier Cabrini; St. Maximilian Kolbe; St. Teresa Benedicta; St. Leopold Mandic; St. José María Escrivá; Pope St. John Paul II; St. Teresa of Calcutta (cf. *With Jesus: The Story of Mary Co-redemptrix*, 213-229).

Theological Clarification

Your Eminence, your comment represents a theologically false dichotomy which implies that both cannot be true: 1) Jesus is the sole divine and human redeemer of humanity; and 2) Mary, as a redeemed human being, in virtue of the graces of her Immaculate Conception, uniquely and objectively cooperated with Jesus Christ, the sole divine and human Redeemer, in the redemption of other human beings.

The fact that Mary herself was redeemed by Christ does not prohibit Mary from her participating in the redemption of the rest of humanity. Christ first redeemed Mary with a preservative redemption through her Immaculate Conception, and then, together with her, redeemed the rest of humanity with a liberative redemption. Therefore, to maintain that Jesus is the sole divine redeemer, which rightfully refers to his primary, universal and self-sufficient causality in the process of Redemption, does not exclude Mary's secondary and completely subordinate cooperation, which draws all of its efficacy from the infinite merits of Jesus Christ.

Particularly during the present 500th anniversary of Protestantism, it is of paramount importance that the people of God not lose sight of what remains distinctive about authentic Catholic Soteriology, which is revealed in Scripture and professed by the Fathers of the Church, that *humanity was redeemed through a divine act which was accompanied by human cooperation*, i.e., a redemption accomplished by the divine and human Jesus Christ, the New Adam, and by Mary, the human New Eve, who then becomes our quintessential human model in our own consequent necessity to freely and actively cooperate with the redemptive act of Jesus Christ for own personal redemption—an essential Catholic truth captured by St. Augustine: “God created us without us, but he did not will to save us without us” (*Sermo* 169.11.13, *PL* 38, 923).

Conclusion

In sum, Your Eminence, to state that “the Church does not call Mary a co-redeemer” or that the Church “does not attribute” to Mary the role of Coredemption, contradicts the repeated authoritative teachings of the Papal Magisterium of six pontificates; the manifest teaching of the Magisterium in its collegial dimension as expressed in the teachings, petitions, and approbations of over 1000 cardinals and bishops during the 20th and 21st centuries; the teachings of 20th and 21st century saints and blessed; and the legitimacy of the Co-redemptrix title referred to during the proceedings of the Second Vatican Council, and by several other national episcopal conferences.

Even if Your Eminence has a personal theological preference against the use of the Co-redemptrix title, it is nonetheless objectively erroneous and pastorally misleading, particularly to the Christian faithful worldwide, to state in a public interview that the Church does not call Mary a co-redeemer or attribute unique Marian coredemption to her. Moreover, to effectively reject the ecclesiastical teachings of 2 Roman pontiffs, 2 cardinal papal theologians, over one thousand cardinals and bishops, and numerous canonized saints and blessed of the last two centuries by referring to this substantive mass of legitimate Church teaching as constituting “false exaggeration” constitutes a monumental error of theology, history, pastoral confusion, and even potential scandal among the People of God.

Once again, Your Eminence, please accept our sincere gratitude for the multi-form positive teachings present in your recent text, and please be assured of Your Eminence’s place in the worldwide prayers of the *International Marian Association*.

Also please find attached a copy of the January 2017 document of the *International Marian Association* entitled, *The Role Of Mary in Redemption*, which provides a more complete synthesis of Marian Coredemption in Scripture, Tradition, Magisterium, History and Theology, which we hope may also be of service to you in future articulations of the Church’s authentic doctrinal teachings of Our Lady as the Co-redemptrix with Jesus Christ, the sole divine Redeemer.

Executive Members, *International Marian Association*

Telesphore Cardinal Toppo Archdiocese of Ranchi, India	Sr. Maria, Servant of Abba Father, SIHJM
Jose Cardinal Sandoval Archdiocese of Guadalajara, Mexico	Fr. Angelo Geiger
Archbishop John Njenga Archdiocese of Mombassa, Kenya	Dr. Mark Miravalle
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Bishop Ayo-Maria Atoyebi Diocese of Illorin, Nigeria	Dr. Luis Bejar-Fuentes
Fr. Peter Damien Fehlner	Dr. Robert Fastiggi
	Christina Martinela Secretariat, IMA

Attachment A—573 Cardinals, Archbishops, and Bishops, Who Have Petitioned the Holy See for a Solemn Definition of Mary as Co-redemptrix

Cardinals (55)

1. José Francisco Cardinal Robles Ortega
2. Ernesto Cardinal Corripio Ahumada
3. Juan Cardinal Carlos Aramburu
4. Paulo Evaristo Cardinal Arns
5. Luis Cardinal Aponte Martínez
6. Miguel Cardinal Obando Bravo
7. Guiseppe Cardinal Caprio
8. John Cardinal Carberry
9. M. Luigi Cardinal Ciappi
10. Albert Cardinal Decourtray
11. Bernardino Echeverría Ruiz
12. Vincenzo Cardinal Fagiolo
13. Jose Cardinal Freire Falcao
14. Juan Francisco Cardinal Fresno
15. Edouard Cardinal Gagnon
16. Jozef Cardinal Glomp
17. Hans Hermann Cardinal Groër
18. Henryk Roman Cardinal Gulbinowicz
19. Franjo Cardinal Kuharic
20. José Alí Cardinal Lebrún Moratinos
21. Juan Cardinal Lyázuri Ricketts
22. Jean-Marie Cardinal Lustiger
23. Emmanuel Cardinal Nsubuga
24. John Cardinal O'Connor
25. Silvio Cardinal Oddi
26. Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga
27. Antony Cardinal Padiyara
28. Opilio Cardinal Rossi
29. Pietro Cardinal Palazzini
30. Raúl Francisco Cardinal Primatesta
31. Antonio Cardinal Ribeiro
32. Aurelio Cardinal Sabattani
33. Juan Cardinal Sandoval Iñiguez
34. Alexyre Cardinal José María dos Santos
35. Jaime Cardinal Sin
36. Alphonse Cardinal Stickler
37. Joseph Cardinal Satowaki
38. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn
39. Adolfo Antonio Cardinal Suárez Rivera
40. Christian Cardinal Tumi
41. Paulos Cardinal Tzadua
42. Corrado Cardinal Ursi
43. Augusto Cardinal Vargas Alzamora
44. Ricardo Cardinal Vidal
45. Aloíso Lorscheider
46. Darío Catrillón Hoyos
47. Juan Landázuri Ricketts
48. Antonio José González Zumárraga
49. Joao Antonio da Silva Sariva.
50. Geraldo Majella Agnelo.
51. Telesphore P. Toppo
52. Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, C.S.S.R.
53. Raymond Cardinal Burke
54. Kelvin Edward Cardinal Felix
55. Tomás Spidlik

Archbishops and Bishops (518):

1. Most Rev. Rrok Mirdita, Archbishop of Durrës-Tirana, Albania
2. Most Rev. Rudolf Graber, Bishop Emeritus of Regensburg, Alemania
3. Most Rev. Antoon Demets, Bishop of Cadossia, Antigua y Barbuda
4. Most Rev. Bernardo Enrique Witte, Bishop of Sma. Concepción, Argentina
5. Most Rev. Manuel Guirao, Bishop of Santiago del Estero, Argentina

6. Most Rev. Omar Felix Colome, Bishop of Cruz del eje, Argentina
7. Most Rev. Juan Rodolfo Laise, Bishop of San Luis, Argentina
8. Most Rev. Rubén Héctor Di Monte, Bishop of Avellaneda, Argentina
9. Most Rev. Carlos Bestro, Bishop, Argentina
10. Most Rev. Antonio Juan Baseotto, Bishop of Añatuya, Argentina
11. Most Rev. Lucas Donnelly, Bishop of Deán Funes, Argentina
12. Most Rev. Angel O. Tossolini Olivier, Bishop of Cruz del Eje, Argentina
13. Most Rev. Pedro Ronchino, Bishop of Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina
14. Most Rev. Mons. Omar Colomé, Bishop of Cruz del Eje, Argentina
15. Most Rev. Miguel Esteban Hesayne, Bishop Emeritus of Viedma, Argentina
16. Most Rev. Eugenio Santiago Peyrou, Bishop Emeritus of Comodoro Rivadavia, Argentina
17. Most Rev. Emilio Ogñénovich, Bishop of Mercedes-Luján, Argentina
18. Most Rev. Dante Dyrelli, Bishop of Formosa, Argentina
19. Most Rev. Edgardo Gabriel Storni, Archbishop of Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz, Argentina
20. Most Rev. Jorge Novak, Bishop of Quilmes, Argentina
21. Most Rev. Pedro Pozzi, Bishop of Alto Valle de Río Negro, Argentina
22. Most Rev. Italo S. Di Stefano, Archbishop of San Juan de Cuyo, Argentina
23. Most Rev. Alfredo Guillermo Disyro, Bishop of Villa María, Argentina
24. Most Rev. Rómulo García, Archbishop of Bahía Blanca, Argentina
25. Most Rev. Fortunato Antonio Rossi, Archbishop Emeritus of Corrientes, Argentina
26. Most Rev. Guillermo Leaden, Bishop Titular of Theudalis, Argentina
27. Most Rev. Paulino Reale, Bishop of Venado Tuerto, Argentina
28. Most Rev. Abelardo Francisco Silva, Bishop of San Miguel, Argentina
29. Most Rev. Alfredo María Espósito Castro, C.M.F., Bishop of Zárate-Campana, Argentina
30. Most Rev. José Vicente Canejero Gallego, Bishop of Formosa, Argentina
31. Most Rev. Charbel Merhi, Bishop of Los Maronitas, Argentina
32. Most Rev. Moisés Julio Blanchoud, Archbishop of Salta, Argentina
33. Most Rev. Alejandro Antonio Buccolini, S.D.B., Bishop of Río Gallegos, Argentina
34. Most Rev. Héctor Aguer, Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires, Argentina
35. Most Rev. Ramón Artemio Staffolani, Bishop of Río Cuarto, Argentina
36. Most Rev. Jorge Arturo Meinvielle, Bishop of San Justo, Argentina
37. Most Rev. Athanasius Schneider, O.R.C., Auxiliary Bishop of Maria Santissima in Astana, Kazakhstan
38. Most Rev. George Eder, Archbishop of Salzburg, Austria
39. Most Rev. Yreas Rohrer, Archbishop Emeritus of Salzburg, Austria
40. Most Rev. Klaus Küng, Bishop of Feldkirch, Austria
41. Most Rev. J. Jobst, Bishop of Broome, Australia
42. Most Rev. Lawrence L. Gryer, Archbishop of Dhaka, Bangladesh
43. Most Rev. Yré-Mutien Léonard, Bishop of Namur, Belgique
44. Most Rev. José Calasanz Rosenhammer, Apostolic Vicar of Chiquitos, Santa Cruz, Bolivia

45. Most Rev. René Fernández Apaza, Archbishop of Cochabamba, Bolivia
46. Most Rev. Leonardo Bernacchi, Apostolic Vicar of Cuervo, Bolivia
47. Most Rev. Luis Sainz Hinojosa, Archbishop of La Paz, Bolivia (4)
48. Most Rev. Pedro Antônio Marchetti Fedalto, Archbishop of Curitiba, Brazil
49. Most Rev. José Carlos de Lima Vaz, Bishop of Marabá, Brazil
50. Most Rev. Vitório Pavanello, Archbishop of Campo Grêye, Brazil
51. Most Rev. Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, Archbishop Emeritus of Diamantina, Brazil
52. Most Rev. Eurico dos Santos Veloso, Bishop of Luz, Brazil
53. Most Rev. D. Elias Manning, Bishop of Valença, Brazil
54. Most Rev. Frei Boaventura Kloppenburg, Bishop of Novo Hamburgo, Brazil
55. Most Rev. Silverio Jarbas Paulo de Albuquerque, Bishop Emeritus of Feira de Santana, Brazil
56. Most Rev. Ricardo Pedro Paglia, Bishop of Pinheiro, Brazil
57. Most Rev. José da Silva Chaves, Bishop of Uruaçu, Brazil
58. Most Rev. Victor Joannes H.J. Tielbeek, Bishop of Formosa, Brazil
59. Most Rev. José Elias Chaves Júnior, Bishop of Cametá, Brazil
60. Most Rev. Manoel Pestana Filho, Bishop of Anápolis, Brazil
61. Most Rev. Geraldo Do Espírito Santo Avila, Military Archbishop of Brazil
62. Most Rev. Waldemar Chaves de Araújo, Bishop of Teófilo, Brazil
63. Most Rev. Agostinho Stefam Januszewicz, Bishop of Luziania, Brazil
64. Most Rev. Miguel D'Aversa, Bishop Emeritus of Humaitá, Brazil
65. Most Rev. Francisco Austregesilo de Mesquita, Bishop of Afogados da Ingazeira, Brazil
66. Most Rev. Marcelo Pinto Carvalheira, Archbishop of Paraíba, Brazil
67. Most Rev. David Picão, Bishop of Santos, Brazil
68. Most Rev. Jorge Scarso, Bishop Emeritus of Patos de Minas, Brazil
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101. Most Rev. Adélio Tomasin, Bishop of Quixadá, Brazil
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110. Most Rev. Jerônimo Mazzarotto, Bishop Auxiliary Emeritus of Curitiba, Brazil
111. Most Rev. Afonso Felipe Gregory, Bishop of Imperatriz, Brazil
112. Most Rev. José de Lima, Bishop of Sete Lagoas, Brazil
113. Most Rev. Henrique Froehlich, S.J., Bishop Emeritus of Sinop, Brazil
114. Most Rev. Jose Nicomedes Grossi, Bishop Emeritus of Bom Jesus da Lapa, Brazil
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131. Most Rev. Orozimo Fuenzalida y Fuenzalida, Bishop of San Bernardo, Chile
132. Most Rev. Bernardo Cazzaro Bertollo, Archbishop of Puerto Montt, Chile
133. Most Rev. Carlos Marcio Camus Larenas, Bishop of Linares, Chile (10)
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143. Most Rev. Augusto Aristizabal-Ospina, Bishop of Jericó, Colombia
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167. Most Rev. Vicente Rodrigo Cisneros Durán, Bishop of Ambato, Ecuador

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176. Most Rev. Gabriel J. Anokye Bishop of Kumasi, Ghana
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180. Most Rev. Angélico M. Melotto, Bishop Emeritus of Sololá, Guatemala
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185. Most Rev. Víctor Hugo Martínez Contreras, Bishop of Quetzaltenango, Los Altos, Guatemala
186. Most Rev. Próspero Penados del Barrio, Primate Archbishop of Guatemala, Guatemala
187. Most Rev. Luis Manresa Formosa, Bishop Emeritus of Quetzaltenango, Guatemala (10)
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192. Most Rev. Luis Alfonso Santos Villeda, S.D.B., Bishop of Santa Rosa de Copán, Honduras
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195. Most Rev. Rayappa Arulappa, Archbishop Emeritus of Madras and Mylapore, India
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197. Most Rev. Cornelius Elanjikal, Archbishop of Verapoly, India
198. Most Rev. Joseph Gabriel Fernyez, Bishop of Quilon, India
199. Most Rev. Benedict Mar GregoRíos, Metropolitan Archbishop of Malankara and Triviyrum, India
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235. Most Rev. Thomas Thiruthalil, Bishop of Balasore, India
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243. Most Rev. Henry D'Souza, Bishop of Bellary, India
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245. Most Rev. A Henrisoesanta, Bishop of Tanjungkarang, Indonesia
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247. Most Rev. Séamus Hegarty, Bishop of Derry, Ireland

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298. Most Rev. José Ulises Macías Salcedo, Bishop of Mexicali, México
299. Most Rev. Rafael León Villegas, Bishop of la Paz, BCS, México
300. Most Rev. Salvador Flores Huerta, Bishop of Cd. Lázaro Cárdenas, México
301. Most Rev. José Melgoza Osorio, Bishop Emeritus of Nezahualcóyotl, México
302. Most Rev. Rafael Romo, Bishop of Tijuana, México
303. Most Rev. Jorge Bernal Vargas, L.C., Bishop Prelate of Chetumal, México
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305. Most Rev. J. Trinidad Sepúlveda Ruiz-Velasco, Bishop of San Juan de los Lagos, México
306. Most Rev. Manuel Mireles Vaquera, Bishop Prelate of El Salto, México
307. Most Rev. Ignacio Lehonor Arroyo, Bishop Emeritus of Tuxpan, México
308. Most Rev. Salvador Martínez Pérez, Bishop of Huejutla, México
309. Most Rev. Miguel Patiño Velázquez, Bishop of Apatzingán, México
310. Most Rev. Antonio Sahagún López, Bishop Emeritus of Guadalajara, México
311. Most Rev. Rogelio Sánchez González, Bishop Emeritus of Colima, México
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314. Most Rev. Felipe Padilla Cardona, Bishop of Huajuapán de León, México
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458. Most Rev. Manuel Afonso de Carvalho, Bishop Emeritus of Angra, Portugal
459. Most Rev. Florentino de Yrade e Silva, Bishop Emeritus of Fâro, Portugal
460. Most Rev. Policarpo da Costa Vaz, Bishop Emeritus of Guarda, Portugal
461. Most Rev. Manuel Ferreira Cabral, Suffragan Bishop Emeritus of Braga, Portugal
462. Most Rev. Francisco Maria da Silva, Archbishop Emeritus of Braga, Portugal
463. Most Rev. António de Castro Xavier Monteiro, Archbishop of Lamego, Portugal
464. Most Rev. Augusto César Alves Ferreira da Silva, Bishop of Portalegre y Castelo Branco, Portugal
465. Most Rev. Agostinho Joaquim Lopes de Moura, Bishop Emeritus of Portalegre y Castelo Branco, Portugal
466. Most Rev. Francesco Franzì, Suffragan Bishop Emeritus of Novara, Portugal
467. Most Rev. Abilio Rivas Archbishop, Portugal
468. Most Rev. Fremiot Torres Oliver, Bishop of Ponce, Puerto Rico
469. Most Rev. Patricio Hachang Alo. Bishop, Philippines
470. Most Rev. Ioan Robu, Archbishop of Bucharest, Romania
471. Most Rev. Alojzij Sustar, Archbishop of Ljubljana, y President of Slovenia Bishop Conference, Slovenia
472. Most Rev. Eduard Kojnok, Bishop of Rožnava, Slovenská Republika
473. Most Rev. Fulgence Werner Le Roy, Bishop of Pietersburg, South Africa
474. Most Rev. Edmund J. Ferny, Bishop of Badulla, Sri Lanka
475. Most Rev. J. Kingsley Swampillai, Bishop of Trincomalee-Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
476. Most Rev. Raymond Peiris, Bishop of Kurunegala, Sri Lanka
477. Most Rev. Joseph Mounayer, Syrian Catholic Archbishop of Damascus, Syria
478. Most Rev. Paolino Lukudu Loro, Archbishop of Juba, Sudan
479. Most Rev. Magnus Mwalunyungu, Bishop of Tunduru, Masasi, Tanzania
480. Most Rev. Fortunatus M. Lukanima, Bishop of Arusha, Tanzania
481. Most Rev. Mario A. Mgulunde, Archbishop of Tabora, Tanzania
482. Most Rev. Jozef Marianus Punt, Bishop of Haarlem-Amsterdam, Holanda
483. Most Rev. Pierre Dubois, Bishop Emeritus of Istanbul, Turkey
484. Most Rev. Paul L. Kalya, Bishop of Fort Portal, Ugya
485. Most Rev. Daniel J. Mullins, Bishop of Menevia, Swansea Wales, United Kingdom
486. Most Rev. Raúl Scarrone, Bishop of Florida, Uruguay
487. Most Rev. Pablo Jaime Galimberti di Vietri, Bishop of San José de Mayo, Uruguay
488. Most Rev. Víctor Gil Lechoza, Bishop of Minas, Uruguay
489. Most Rev. Thomas V. Daily, Bishop of Brooklyn, U.S.A.
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491. Most Rev. Nicholas Elko, Archbishop of Cincinnati, U.S.A.
492. Most Rev. John J. Fitzpatrick, Bishop Emeritus of Brownsville, U.S.A.
493. Most Rev. Charles V. Grahmann, Bishop of Dallas, U.S.A.
494. Most Rev. Vincent M. Harris, Bishop of Austin, U.S.A.
495. Most Rev. Donald Montrose, Bishop of Stockton, U.S.A.
496. Most Rev. Edward J. Slattery, Bishop of Tulsa, U.S.A.
497. Most Rev. James S. Sullivan, Bishop of Fargo, U.S.A.

498. Most Rev. James C. Timlin, Bishop of Scranton, U.S.A.
499. Most Rev. John J. Ward, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles, U.S.A.
500. Most Rev. William G. Connare, Bishop Emeritus of Greensburg, U.S.A.
501. Most Rev. Thomas Tschoepe, Bishop Emeritus of Dallas, U.S.A.
502. Most Rev. John J. Cassata, Bishop of Fort Worth, U.S.A.
503. Most Rev. John L. Morkovsky, Bishop of Galveston-Houston, U.S.A.
504. Most Rev. Harold R. Perry, Bishop of New Orleans, U.S.A.
505. Most Rev. John J. Myers, Bishop of Peoria, U.S.A.
506. Most Rev. Basil H. Losten, Ukrainian Catholic Bishop of Stamford, U.S.A.
507. Most Rev. Antonio Arellano Durán, Bishop of San Carlos, Venezuela
508. Most Rev. Ubaldo Ramón Santana, Bishop of Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela
509. Most Rev. Helímenas de Jesús Rojo Paredes, Bishop of Calabozo, Venezuela
510. Most Rev. Tulio Chirivella Varela, Archbishop of Barrquisimeto, Venezuela
511. Most Rev. Miguel Antonio Salas, Archbishop Emeritus of Mérida, Venezuela
512. Most Rev. Francisco Iturriza Guillén, Bishop Emeritus of Coro, Venezuela
513. Most Rev. Eduardo Tomás Boza Masvidal, Bishop of Vinda, Venezuela
514. Most Rev. Joseph Vu Duy Nhat, Bishop of Bui Chu, Vietnam
515. Most Rev. Petar Perkolic, Primado of Serbia, Archbishop of Bar, Yugoslavia
516. Most Rev. Emmanuel Milingo, Archbishop Emeritus of Lusaka, Zambia
517. Most Rev. Hanna Kaldany, Latin Patriarchal Vicariate, Nazareth, Israel
518. Most Rev. Justus Joseph Beltritti, Latin Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem

The Role of Mary in Redemption

A Document of the Theological Commission of the International Marian Association

1. “Be it done unto me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Through the free cooperation of a woman, Jesus Christ, the divine and human Redeemer, entered the world (cf. Gal 4:4-6). Mary, the Immaculate Virgin of Nazareth, through her free and feminine “yes,” consented to the conception of divine Word in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit, and thus mediated the “one mediator” (1 Tim 2:5) to the world, bringing salvation to the human race. St. Irenaeus declared that Mary is the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race”¹; St. Jerome pronounced, “Death through Eve; life through Mary”²; and St. Teresa of Calcutta stated simply, “No Mary, no Jesus.”³

2. Mary’s participation in the saving work of Jesus is entirely dependent on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, the only divine Redeemer. Mary’s sharing in the redemptive work of Jesus relies entirely on the salvation accomplished by Christ, who is the “one mediator between God and man,” and who “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:5-6). Mary’s human participation in Redemption (λυτρώσις)⁴ is entirely dependent upon the unique Redemption achieved by the Word made flesh, relies wholly on his infinite merits, and is sustained by his one mediation. Mary’s sharing in the redemptive mission of her Son in no way obscures or diminishes the unique Redemption of humanity accomplished by Jesus Christ, but rather serves to manifest its power and fruits.⁵

3. Mary’s unique participation in the Redemption accomplished by Christ is founded upon her role as Mother of God, as she cooperated in bringing Jesus into the world, and providing the Redeemer with the very instrument of Redemption, which is his body: ..”We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ,

¹ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, V.III, Ch. 22, n.4, PG 7, 959 A, Harvey 2, 123.

² St. Jerome, *Epist.* 22, 21; PL 22, 408.

³ Common expression of St. Teresa of Calcutta; for general treatment of Our Lady and St. Teresa of Calcutta, cf. Joseph Langford, MC, *Mother Teresa: In the Shadow of Our Lady, Our Sunday Visitor*, 2007.

⁴ The New Testament notion of “redemption” comes from the basic root λύω (“to untie,” “to loose,” “to set free,” or even “to destroy”). This is clearly related to the abstract noun forms λυτρώσις (cf. Lk 1:68; Heb 9:12) and ἀπολυτρώσις (cf. Lk 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7; 1:14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15), both typically rendered “redemption.” For definitions, cf. William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, 2000.

⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 60.

once for all” (cf. Heb 10:10). Mary is the “woman” prophesied as the mother of the “seed” of victory (cf. Gen 3:15) who was blessed by the Father with a divinely granted “enmity” between herself and the serpent. Mary, the “full of grace” (Lk 1:28) was providentially prepared by the Father through her Immaculate Conception to participate with the Son in the crushing of the head of Satan and redeeming humanity from sin, and to pass on to her divine Son an immaculate human nature like her own in order to accomplish the mission of Redemption.⁶ Mary’s Immaculate Conception, along with her Divine Motherhood, makes appropriate her unique cooperation in the redemptive work of Christ.

4. The unique human cooperation of Mary with Jesus in the work of Redemption which began at the Annunciation, was explicitly confirmed at the Presentation in the words of Simeon, “and a sword shall pierce through your own heart, too” (Lk 2:35). Mary’s saving role with Jesus continued uninterruptedly until the historic summit of Redemption on Calvary (cf. Jn 19:25-27). As the Second Vatican Council teaches:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in union with her son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple, with these words: “woman, behold your son” (Jn 19:26-27).⁷

And again:

She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son’s sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in

⁶ Cf. Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854. Along with the solemn definition, the document also offers the following papal commentary on Genesis 3:15: “That his most Blessed Mother, the Virgin Mary, was prophetically indicated; and, at the same time, the very enmity of both against the evil one was significantly expressed. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and man, assumed human nature, blotted the handwriting of the decree that stood against us, and fastened it triumphantly to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with him by a most intimate and indissoluble bond, was, with him and through him, eternally at enmity with the evil serpent, and most completely triumphed over him, and thus crushed his head with her immaculate foot.”

⁷ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 58

the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace.⁸

5. Within the rich Tradition of the Church the patristic concept of Mary as the “New Eve”⁹ who uniquely worked with Jesus, the “New Adam,”¹⁰ to restore the life of grace to the human family contains within itself the doctrine of Mary’s unique participation with Jesus in the Redemption.¹¹ The early Fathers of the Church taught that God willed to restore grace to the human race by using the same three elements used by the Adversary for its loss: a man, a woman, and a tree,¹² and that Mary was the obedient Virgin who actively participated with Jesus as the “cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race.”¹³ We can see, therefore, how the role of Mary as the New Eve was not arbitrary, but central alongside Christ, the New Adam, in the plan of God for the redemption and consequent restoration of grace to the human race. It is evident that God wanted a woman, in her free feminine and maternal dignity, to play a central role in the redeeming work of Jesus.¹⁴

The doctrine of Mary’s role in the Redemption, sometimes referred to as “Marian Coredemption,” which was initially focused upon the redemptive Incarnation, gradually extended to Mary’s co-suffering at Calvary by the end of the first millennium, as exemplified in the writings of the Byzantine monk, John the Geometer.¹⁵ At the same time, the legitimate term “redemptrix”¹⁶ first appeared in reference to Mary’s subordinate participation in the salvation wrought by Christ (in ways analogous to the earlier historical appearance of the term “Mediatrice” as applied to Mary in reference to her role with Jesus, the one Mediator¹⁷). In the twelfth centu-

⁸ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 61.

⁹ Cf. St. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Ch. 100, PG 6, 709-712; St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, Ch. 22, n.4, PG 7, 959 A, Harvey 2, 123; St. Jerome, *Epist.* 22, 21; PL 22, 408.

¹⁰ Cf. 1 Cor 15:45; Rom 5:12-18.

¹¹ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 56; for doctrine of Coredemption, cf. *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 58, 61.

¹² Cf. for example, St. Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Ch. 100; PG 6, 709-712; St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, Ch. 22, n. 4, PG 7, 959 A, Harvey 2, 123.

¹³ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, III, Ch. 22, n. 4, PG 7, 959 A, Harvey 2, 123.

¹⁴ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 3: “A woman is to be found at the center of this salvific event.”

¹⁵ John the Geometer, *Life of Mary*, Bol. 196, 123; cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Wednesday Audience*, October 25, 1995, *Inseg.* XVIII/2 (1995) 934-936.

¹⁶ *Litanies des saintes*, Cathedral of Salisbury, Parchment 173; cf. Laurentin, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice*, 11-12.

¹⁷ Cf. Theoteknos, Homily on the Assumption, n. 9, in A. Wenger, *L’Assomption de la Très Sainte Vierge dans la Tradition Byzantine du VI au X siècle*, Paris 1955, 289, 291; St. Germanus of Constantinople, *Homily 2 on the Dormition*, PG 98, 357.

ry, Mary's "compassion" (*cum passio*, or "suffering with") was taught by St. Bernard of Clairvaux,¹⁸ and his disciple, Arnold of Chartres referred to the Mother of Jesus being "co-crucified," and that she spiritually "co-dies" with Jesus at Calvary.¹⁹ By the 15th century, the term "Co-redemptrix,"²⁰ was used in the Tradition, with the "co"²¹ prefix providing a greater accent on the subordination of Mary to Jesus in Redemption. In the 16th century, one of the Council of Trent's foremost theologians, Jesuit Alphonsus Salmerón, repeatedly used and defended the Co-redemptrix title.²² From the 16th to the 18th century, the Co-redemptrix term would gradually become more frequently used than "Redemptrix" in denoting the unique sharing of the Mother in the redemptive mission of the Son.²³

The prefix "co-" is derived with the Latin "*cum*" which indicates in its first etymological meaning "with" and not "equal." The Latin, "*redimere*," literally means to "buy back," and the "*trix*" suffix refers to the feminine. In unified form, the Co-redemptrix term denotes the subordinate participation of Mary the "New Eve" in the buying back of the human race from sin through the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the "New Adam."²⁴

6. Beginning with the 19th century papal Magisterium, we have a consistent papal teaching on Mary's unique participation in the Redemption as an official Church doctrine, which will extend successively to the 21st century papal Magisterium.²⁵ Of special mention during this period is the explicit use of the Co-redemptrix title by the Holy Office (now Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith) and Congre-

¹⁸ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Serm. 3 in Purificatione Beatae Mariae*, 2; PL 183, 370; cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Wednesday Audience*, October 25, 1995, Inseg. XVIII/2 (1995) 934-936.

¹⁹ Arnold of Chartres, *De septem verbis Domini in cruce*, 3; PL 189, 1694; PL 189, 1726-1727; PL 189, 1693 B; cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Wednesday Audience*, October 25, 1995, Inseg. XVIII/2 (1995) 934-936.

²⁰ *Orat. Ms S. Petri Slaiburgens, saec. XV; Codex Petrin, a, III, 20; Orat. Ms S. Petri. Saec. XIV, XV; Codex Petrin. , 1, 20*, quoted in M. Dreves, *Analecta hymnica medii aevi, Leipzig, Reisland*, t. 46, 1905, 126, n. 79.

²¹ The prefix "co" is etymologically rooted in the Latin word "cum" which is translated "with." Only secondary connotations of "cum" convey a concept of equality.

²² Alphonsus Salmerón, *Commentarii in Evangel.*, Tr. 5, Opera, Cologne, ed. Hierat, 1604, t. III, 37b-38a; *Commentarii*, vol. 10, tr. 41, 359b. vol. 10, tr. 41, 359b; vol. 11, tr. 38, 312a; vol. 3; tr. 43, 495a.

²³ Cf. R. Laurentin, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice*, 19.

²⁴ Cf. St. Bonaventure, *de Donis Spiritus Sancti*, 6:14; col 6:17; *Opera Omnia*, vol 5, 486.

²⁵ Cf. J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione Beatae Virginis Mariae*, Rome, 1950; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, Isola Del Liri, Pisani, 144-155. For a survey of papal texts from Leo XIII to John Paul II, cf. A. Calkins, "The Mystery of Mary Co-redemptrix in the Papal Magisterium," *Mary Co-redemptrix: Doctrinal Issues Today*, Queenship, 2002, 25-92; M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., "The Marian Coredemption Through Two Millennia," *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79-112.

gation of Rites (now Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments), as well as its approval under the pontificate of Pope St. Pius X;²⁶ the papal teaching of Benedict XV: “that we rightly say that she [Mary] redeemed the human race together with Christ;”²⁷ the first three papal usages of the Co-redemptrix title by Pope Pius XI;²⁸ and the explicit defense of the Co-redemptrix title by Pius XI:

By necessity, the Redeemer could not but associate [non poteva, per necessità di cose, non associare] his Mother in his work. For this reason we invoke her under the title of Coredemptrix. She gave us the Savior, she accompanied him in the work of Redemption as far as the Cross itself, sharing with Him the sorrows and the agony and in the death in which Jesus consummated the Redemption of mankind.²⁹

7. The Second Vatican Council explicitly teaches the doctrine of Mary’s participation in the Redemption, from her consent at the Annunciation (cf. Lk 1:38) to her ongoing cooperation and co-suffering with Jesus throughout his saving mission (cf. Lk 2:35), which culminated at Calvary (cf. Jn 19:25-27), as has been cited from *Lumen Gentium*, nn 58 and 61. It is further significant that the first schema of the document on Mary as prepared by theologians of the Holy Office contained a strong historical, theological, and magisterial defense of the Co-redemptrix title within its notation.³⁰ Declared “Mother of the Church”³¹ by Pope Bl. Paul VI,

²⁶ Congregation of Rites, May 13, 1908, *AAS* 1, 1908, 409; in which the Congregation itself uses the Co-redemptrix title in granting the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary to be raised to the rank of double rite; as does the Holy Office, Congregation of the Holy Office,; *AAS* 5, 1913, 364; Congregation of the Holy Office, January 22, 1914, *AAS* 6, 1914, 108.

²⁷ Pope Benedict XV, *Inter Sodalicia*, *AAS* 10, 181-182.

²⁸ Cf. Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L’Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; Pius XI, *Allocution to Spanish Pilgrims*, *L’Osservatore Romano*, March 25, 1934, 1; Pius XI, *Radio Message for the Closing of the Holy Year at Lourdes*, *L’Osservatore Romano*, April 29-30, 1935, 1.

²⁹ Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L’Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933, 1.

³⁰ “*De Maria Virgine Matre Dei et Matre Hominum*,” Section 3, note 16, *Acta Synodalia Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis*, 1971, vol. 1, pt. 4. The decision to exclude the Co-redemptrix title from the final version of the Marian document to be eventually found in *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 8 did not come from the Council Fathers themselves, but from a theological sub-committee who would state in a “*Praenotanda*” explanatory pre-note, that while certain terms used by Roman Pontiffs such as “Co-redemptrix of the human race” were “absolutely true in themselves,” they “may be understood with difficulty by separated brethren (in this case, Protestants)” and were, for that reason, “omitted” from the schema. Cf. *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV, Praenotanda*, Vatican City, 1971, 99; cf. *Besutti, Lo Schema Mariano*, 41.

Mary “cooperated in initiating God’s kingdom”³² and thus manifested her motherly Coredemption for the Church.

8. Following the Council, Pope St. John Paul II invoked Mary as the “Co-redemptrix” on at least seven occasions³³ during his pontificate, and provided a vast quantity of teachings on the doctrine of Mary’s participation in the Redemption, as manifested in his encyclicals, apostolic letters, exhortations, homilies, and audiences.³⁴ One example of his use of the Co-redemptrix title, highlighted within the context of a rich theology of Marian Coredemption based on *Lumen Gentium*, n. 58, can be seen in this 1985 homily:

Crucified spiritually with her crucified Son (cf. Gal 2:20), she contemplated with heroic love the death of her God, she “lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim born of her” (*Lumen Gentium*, 58).... At Calvary with the sacrifice of her Son that led to the foundation of the Church Having suffered for the Church, Mary deserved to become the mother of all the dis-

³¹ Declaration of Blessed Paul VI at Second Vatican Council, November 21, 1964 (*AAS*, 1964, 39).

³² Pope St. John Paul II, “Blessed Virgin Is the Mother of the Church,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., September 24, 1997, 11.

³³ Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocation to the Sick*, September 8, 1982, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol 3, 1982, 404; General Audience, December 10, 1982, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Dec. 18, 1982, 2; General Audience, Nov. 4, 1984, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Nov. 12, 1984, 1; *Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Alborada*, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., March 11, 1985; World Youth Day Allocation, May 31, 1985, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 9, 1985, 12; Allocation to the Volunteers for the Sick at Lourdes, March 24, 1990, *Insegnamenti*, XIII/1, 1990, 743:1; *Allocation on Sixth Centenary Canonization of St. Brigid of Sweden*, October 6, 1991, *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., October 14, 1991, 4. Decades before the numerous references to Co-redemptrix by Pope St. John Paul II, Fr. Laurentin strongly defended the legitimacy of the Co-redemptrix title in virtue of its previous usages and approvals by the papal magisterium: “Used or protected by two popes, even in the most humble exercise of their supreme magisterium, the term [Co-redemptrix] henceforth requires our respect. It would be gravely presumptuous, at the very least, to attack its legitimacy,” R. Laurentin, *Le Titre de Corédemptrice, Étude Historique in Marianum*, 13, 1951, 418. This is not to imply that this quote represents Laurentin’s present position on the Co-redemptrix title.

³⁴ Cf. for example, A. Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Teaching on Marian Coredemption, Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical, Queenship, 1997; and A. Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium in Marian Coredemption: Consistent Teaching and More Recent Perspectives,” *Mary at the Foot of the Cross: Acts of the International Symposium on Marian Coredemption*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 1-37.

ciples of her Son Mary's role as Co-redemptrix did not cease with the glorification of her Son.³⁵

Also important within the Mariological teachings of Pope St. John Paul II is his magisterial confirmation of Mary's unique role with Jesus in the acquisition of the graces of Redemption.³⁶ The immaculate Mother alone, of all creatures, shared in the actual obtaining of the graces with Christ as the Co-redemptrix with the Redeemer, whereas all Christians are called to participate in the consequential release and distribution of the redemptive graces acquired at Calvary.³⁷

The collaboration of Christians in salvation takes place after the Calvary event, whose fruits they endeavor to spread by prayer and sacrifice. Mary, instead, cooperated in the event itself and in the role of mother; thus her cooperation embraces the whole of Christ's saving work. She alone was associated in this way with the redemptive sacrifice that merited the salvation of all mankind. In union with Christ and in submission to him, she collaborated in obtaining the graces of salvation for all humanity.³⁸

What is evident in the papal teachings of Pope St. John Paul II, as is also consistently found in the historic and theological use of the Co-redemptrix title, is the *essential relationship between the title and the doctrine*. The Co-redemptrix title is a single term that denotes the doctrine of Mary's special participation in the Redemption accomplished by Christ. Even when the term is not used, the Christian truth of Mary's coredemptive role with Jesus remains as a doctrine consistently and officially taught by the Church's papal and conciliar Magisterium. When the title is used, as exemplified in the teachings of Pope St. John Paul II, it is utilized precisely to signify the unique though in every way subordinate participation of Mary in Jesus's redemptive act. Therefore, any use of the Co-redemptrix title to denote anything other than Mary's subordinate role with Jesus in Redemption is a misuse of the title itself and should be identified as such (as can happen with any other Mariological or even Christological title), and not as anything intrinsically inappropriate or ambiguous about the Co-redemptrix title itself.

³⁵ Pope St. John Paul II, *Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Alborada*, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., March 11, 1985.

³⁶ Mary's unique participation with Christ in the acquisition or obtaining of the graces of Redemption has been referred to as her role in "Objective Redemption."

³⁷ The release and distribution of redemptive graces has been, in the past, theologically denoted as "Subjective Redemption."

³⁸ Pope St. John Paul II, "Cooperator in the Redemption" Audience, April 7, 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, April 16, 1997, 7; cf. also *Salvific Doloris*, 1984, 25; Papal Audience, April 2, 1997 Papal Audience, October 25, 1995.

During the pontificate of Pope St. John Paul II, an ecumenical gathering of 15 Catholic theologians and 6 theologians from other Christian traditions took place in 1996 and is referred to as the “Częstochowa Commission.” This commission (which sometimes has been referred to as a specially appointed papal commission that gave serious study to the proposition of a solemn definition of Marian core-demption) concluded that the three titles were “ambiguous” and hence more theological study was required before any papal definition of these roles should take place.³⁹ In point of fact, several members of the Częstochowa Commission have stated that this ecumenical gathering was neither specifically assembled to study this question, nor was there any serious study of the issue, but only one discussion lasting one half hour. Nevertheless, in response to their conclusion that the Co-redemptrix title is too “ambiguous” for a potential definition, Mary Co-redemptrix is sufficiently clear and doctrinally sound to have been used by two Roman pontiffs,⁴⁰ several Vatican congregations,⁴¹ theologians of the former Holy Office,⁴² hundreds of cardinals, bishops, theologians, and clergy,⁴³ great numbers of saints,⁴⁴

³⁹ *Declaration of the Theological Commission of the Congress of the Pontifical International Marian Academy*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, June 4, 1997.

⁴⁰ Cf. Pius XI, *Allocution to Pilgrims from Vicenza, Italy*, November 30, 1933, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933, 1; Pius XI, *Allocution to Spanish Pilgrims*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 25, 1934, 1; Pius XI, *Radio Message for the Closing of the Holy Year at Lourdes*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 29-30, 1935, 1; Pope St. John Paul II, Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocution to the Sick*, September 8, 1982, *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol 3, 1982, 404; General Audience, Nov. 4, 1984, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Nov. 12, 1984, 1; *Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Alborada*, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., March 11, 1985; World Youth Day Allocution, May 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 9, 1985, 12; Allocution to the Volunteers for the Sick at Lourdes, March 24, 1990, *Insegnamenti*, XIII/1, 1990, 743:1; *Allocution on Sixth Centenary Canonization of St. Brigid of Sweden*, October 6, 1991, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., October 14, 1991, 4.

⁴¹ Congregation of Rites, May 13, 1908, *AAS* 1, 1908, 409; in which the Congregation itself uses the Co-redemptrix title in granting the feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary to be raised to the rank of double rite; as does the Holy Office, Congregation of the Holy Office.; *AAS* 5, 1913, 364; Congregation of the Holy Office, January 22, 1914, *AAS* 6, 1914, 108.

⁴² Cf. First Schema of the Marian Document at the Second Vatican Council as drafted by theologians of the Holy Office and inclusive of a significant history and defense of the Co-redemptrix title, “*De Maria Vergine Matre Dei et Matre Hominum*,” Section 3, note 16, *Acta Synodalia Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis*, 1971, vol. 1, pt. 4.

⁴³ Cf. for example, J.B. Carol, *De corredemptione*, Rome, 1950, 198-221; G. Roschini, *Maria Santissima Nella Storia Della Salvezza*, Vol. II, 1969, 172-189; D. Bertetto, *Maria corredentrice, la cooperazione prossima e immediata di Maria alla redenzione cristiana*, Alba 1951; J. Bover, *Maria mediatrice universal. Soteriologia mariana*, Madrid, 1946; J. Galot, *Maria, la donna nella opera della salvezza*, Roma 2005; J. Idigoris, *La maternidad espiritual de María*, Bogotá, 1986; R. Javelet, *Marie la femme mediatrice*, Paris, 1984. J. Salgado, *La Maternité Spirituelle de la très Sainte Vierge Marie*, Vaticano, 1990; M. Hauke, “La cooperazione attiva de Maria alla Redenzione, Prospettiva storica (patristica, medievale, moderna, contemporanea)” *Maria, Unica Cooperatrice Alla Reden-*

blesseds,⁴⁵ mystics,⁴⁶ religious congregations and associations,⁴⁷ as well as accepted by millions of lay faithful⁴⁸ for over seven centuries. As to the commission's call for greater study of the title and its definability, this suggestion seems most appropriate if executed seriously and objectively.

10. In sum, the Marian title "Co-redemptrix" signifies in a single term the traditional and magisterial doctrine of Mary's unique participation with and under Jesus in the work of Redemption. The Co-redemptrix title in no way denotes any form of equal, parallel, rival or competitive role of Mary with Jesus, as such would constitute both heresy and blasphemy.⁴⁹ The philosophical and theological meaning of "participation" includes the understanding of an inferior being "taking part in" (*partem capere*) the perfections or qualities of a superior being.⁵⁰ Thus, Mary's participation in the Redemption of Christ in no way diminishes his perfect divine Redemption, but rather in a human feminine and maternal expression, partakes in its divine power and efficacy.⁵¹

It is therefore most appropriate in the proper analogous use of the same root word, "redemption," to indicate Mary's participation in the mission of the Redeemer with the term, Co-redemptrix." This same is true when applied to humanity to

zione. *Atti del Simposio sui Mistero della Corredenzione Mariana*, Fatima, Portogallo, 2005, Academy of the Immaculate; , J. Kosiak, *Could Holy Mary Be Called Co-redemptrix?* Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken 2015.

⁴⁴ Cf. for example, S. Miotto, "La voce dei Santi e la 'Corredentrice,' *Maria Corredentrice*, Frigento, Italy, 2000, Vol. III, 189-223; S. Manelli, "Marian Coredemption in the Hagiography of the 20th Century," *Mary at the Foot of the Cross: Acts of the International Symposium on Marian Coredemption*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, 175-236; Miravalle, "Contemporary Saints and Mary Co-redemptrix," *With Jesus: The Story of Mary Co-redemptrix*, Ch. XIV, 213-229.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Cf. for example: M. Perillo, F.I. and M. Somerton, F.I., "The Marian Coredemption Through Two Millennia," *Mary at the Foot of the Cross*, Ratcliffe College, England, 2002, Academy of the Immaculate, 79-112; M. Miravalle, J.B. Carol, *De Corredemptione, Romae*, 1950; "My Son and I Redeemed the World," *With Jesus: The Story of Mary Co-redemptrix*, Ch. IX, 93-97.

⁴⁷ Cf. for example, *Congregation of Mother Co-redemptrix* (Vietnam); *Figlie de S.S. Maria Corredentrice* (Italy).

⁴⁸ Over 7 million petitions for the solemn papal definition of the doctrine of Mary's Spiritual Motherhood, inclusive of its three essential aspects of Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate, have been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith by in the international Catholic lay movement, *Vox Populi Mariae Mediatrici*, from 1993 to 2000, cf. www.fifthmariandogma.com.

⁴⁹ Cf. Pope St. John Paul, *October 1, 1997 Wednesday Audience*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Ed., 3.

⁵⁰ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, aa. 44-45; I-II, 91, a. 2.

⁵¹ Cf. Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 60.

be “co-redeemers in Christ,” as has been used by the Roman pontiffs.⁵² The use of the same root term of Redemption positively expresses the unity and intimacy of cooperation that God has willed for his human creatures, whom he calls to share in the mission of Redemption as “co-heirs,”⁵³ “co-creators,”⁵⁴ “co-sanctifiers,”⁵⁵ and co-workers.”⁵⁶ As St. Augustine rightly confirms, “God created us without us, but he did not will to save us without us.”⁵⁷ Not only is the Co-redemptrix term theologically acceptable in articulating the intimacy and complementarity between the divine Redeemer and his immaculate human mother, but the title is actually necessary to properly denote and signify in a single term the providentially designed unity between Jesus and Mary, God-man and human woman, New Adam and New Eve, Redeemer and Co-redemptrix, in the historic work of Redemption.

Mary’s role as Co-redemptrix has no meaning outside of the Redemption accomplished by Christ. It is a term, which, by its very nature, returns our focus to the Cross of Christ, and hence is intrinsically Christological in meaning and orientation. Mary Co-redemptrix proclaims to the world that human suffering is redemptive when joined with the suffering of Jesus Christ. The Co-redemptrix term for Mary necessarily leads the world back to the Cross of Christ and the necessity of the Redeemer for the salvation of humanity. Present theology must therefore avoid a rigid or overly restrictive use of the term, “redemption” which would, in a break from Tradition, prohibit any analogous participation by the Mother of Jesus or the rest of humanity in the redemptive work of Jesus, and thus run contrary to the clear scriptural call of St. Paul for all Christians to “make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the Church (Col 1:24).”

11. Mindful of the critically important ecumenical mandate of the Church, recent theological testimonies and defenses for the legitimacy of the Co-redemptrix title from other Christian traditions also confirm the ecumenical capacity for the proper understanding of Mary as the Co-redemptrix with Christ the Redeemer.⁵⁸

⁵² Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Allocation to the Sick at the Hospital of the Brothers of St. John of God, April 5, 1981*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 13, 1981, 6; *Address to the Sick following General Audience*, January 13, 1982, Inseg. V/1, 1982, 91; *Address to the Bishops of Uruguay, May 8, 1988*, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., May 30, 1988, 4.

⁵³ *Eucharistic Prayer II, Liturgy of the Novus Ordo*.

⁵⁴ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, 43.

⁵⁵ For example, the Bishop’s distribution of the Sacrament of Confirmation and the priest or deacon’s distribution of the sacrament of Christian Baptism are all true participations in the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁶ 1 Cor 3:9.

⁵⁷ St. Augustine, *Sermo* 169, 11, 13; *PL* 38, 923.

⁵⁸ For positive discussion of the Co-redemptrix title and/or the proposition of a solemn definition of the Co-redemptrix doctrine, cf. for example, Anglican author, Dr. Judith Gentle, “Ecumenism Is the Issue: On Declaring the Dogma of Our Lady as Co-redemptrix,

With prayer as its soul and dialogue as its body,⁵⁹ the ecumenical mission for Christian unity must also include an accurate, honest, and transparent dialogue about the Church's perennial teaching on Marian Coredemption. Certainly, further magisterial teachings on Mary's true role as Co-redemptrix would be articulated in such a way as to distinguish clearly what is foundational and unique in the Redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, and what is participatory in the role of Mary, and thus constitute, apart from initial appearances, an authentic contribution to true Christian ecumenical dialogue as delineated by the Church.⁶⁰ Mothers, by nature, unite, and the whole truth about Mary should not be seen as an obstacle to Christian unity, but rather as a maternal means of truth and intercession which will powerfully aid the accomplishment of the desire of Jesus for his disciples that "all may be one"(Jn 17:21).⁶¹

12. Not only did Mary actively cooperate with the historic acquisition of the graces of Redemption merited by the Lord Jesus,⁶² she also participates in the distribution of redemptive graces to the human family as the Mediatrix of all graces. Three centuries of papal Magisterium articulate and confirm that each and every grace of Redemption merited by the Redeemer at Calvary comes to us through the intercession of Mary.⁶³ For reason of Mary's unique and singular cooperation in restoring supernatural life to souls,⁶⁴ as the Council teaches, Mary is a "mother to us in the order of grace" who "intercedes for the gifts of eternal life"⁶⁵ and is rightly invoked in the Church under the title of "Mediatrix."⁶⁶ The postconciliar papal Magisterium continues to teach this doctrine, as Pope St. John Paul II invoked the

Mediatrix of all Graces and Advocate Forthwith!," *Vatican City Day of Dialogue on the Fifth Marian Dogma*, March 25, 2010, www.motherofallpeoples.com; Anglican Dr. John Macquarrie; J. Macquarrie, "Mary Coredemptrix and Disputes Over Justification and Grace, An Anglican View," *Mary Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical*, 245-258; in context of Co-redemptrix relative to the Incarnation, Evangelical Theologian, Tim Perry, *Mary For Evangelicals: Toward An Understanding of the Mother of Our Lord*, Inter Varsity Press, 2006.

⁵⁹ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, nn. 21, 28.

⁶⁰ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 1995, nn. 36, 18.

⁶¹ Cf. Pope St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 79.

⁶² Pope St. John Paul II, "Cooperator in the Redemption," General Audience, April 9, 1997, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 1997, 7.

⁶³ For survey of popes from Benedict XIV to Benedict XVI, see A. Apollonio, "Mary Mediatrix of All Graces," *Mariology For Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, Seat of Wisdom, 2007, 444-461.

⁶⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 61

⁶⁵ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

⁶⁶ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

Immaculate Virgin as “Mediatrice of all graces” on eight occasions,⁶⁷ and Pope Benedict XVI also referred to Mary as the *Mediatrice omnium gratiarum*.⁶⁸

Mary also continues her mission of maternal coredemption with Jesus through her ongoing intercession for the human family as Advocate.⁶⁹ In putting into maternal action her most ancient title,⁷⁰ Our Lady’s intercession of protection, grace and peace for the Church and for all humanity, especially at times of historic trial and persecution, is yet one more manifestation of her motherly mediation in directing humanity to the salvation and peace that comes only from Jesus Christ.⁷¹

Why, then, if the role of Mary as Co-redemptrix (as well as her subsequent roles as Mediatrice and Advocate) is a doctrinal truth, need it be proclaimed? Surely, heaven is aware of its universal Marian significance and efficacy, but it always pleases the Lord when the truth about his Mother is freely and joyfully accepted by humanity, testified to by humanity, *proclaimed by humanity*. “For this I have been born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth” (Jn 18:37), and when the People of God testify to the truth of Mary as Co-redemptrix, this brings both great grace to humanity and great joy to the Heart of the Redeemer.

13. The year 2017 commemorates the centenary of the historic apparitions of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima, which is, in itself, a powerful manifestation of *Our Lady’s Coredemption in action*. At the heart of the Fatima message is a Marian call for coredemption by all the Christian faithful in offering prayer, penance, and sacrifice in reparation to God and for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of

⁶⁷ Pope St. John Paul usages of “Mediatrice of all graces”: December 1, 1978 *Address to Provincial Superiors and Directors of the Italian Institutes of the Congregation of St. Joseph*, n. 3, Inseg. I, 1978, 250; August 30, 1980 *Address to Young People at the Marian Shrine of Mount Roio*, n. 3, Inseg. III/2, 1980, 495; *L’Osservatore Romano* English ed., 648:3; January 17, 1988 *Angelus Address*, n. 2, Inseg., XI/1, 1988, 119; *L’Osservatore Romano* English ed., 1023:5; April 10, 1988, *Homily at Mary, Mother of the Redeemer Parish*, n. 7, Inseg. XI/1, 1988, 863; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., 1036:11; July 2, 1990, *Shrine at Our Lady of Graces in Benevento*, n. 1, Inseg. XIII/2, 1990, 17; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., 1148:2; June 28, 1996 *Address to Mercedarian Sisters of Charity*, n. 4, Inseg. XIX/1, 1996, 1638; *L’Osservatore Romano*, English ed., 1451:5.

⁶⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Feb. 11, 2013, *Letter Designating Archbishop Zimonski as Papal Representative to 2013 World Day of the Sick*, Jan. 10, 2013, released Feb. 11, 2013, Inseg. di Benedetto XVI, IX, 51.

⁶⁹ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

⁷⁰ St. Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 5, 19, 1, SC 153, 248-251.

⁷¹ For example, the early Church *Sub Tuum Praesidium* prayer to the Mother of God for her advocacy (third century); the 1571 Battle of Lepanto and Our Lady of Victory; the 1683 Battle of Vienna and the Holy Name of Mary; Prayer for Mary’s Advocacy for Contemporary Church and World at conclusion of Pope St. John Paul II’s, *Christifidelis Laici*, Dec. 30, 1988, 64; cf. Prayer of Pope Francis to Our Lady for Peace, *Day of Prayer and Fasting*, September 7, 2014.

souls, especially those in the greatest need of God's mercy.⁷² On October 13, 1917, Our Lady appears as "Our Lady of Sorrows" which profoundly conveys her role as the Co-redemptrix.⁷³ At Fatima, Mary acts as both Mediatrix in bringing forth the opportunity for historic grace for humanity,⁷⁴ and as Advocate in seeking to protect the world from the ongoing threat of war, persecutions for the Church, sufferings for the Holy Father, and even the annihilation of nations if we do not cease offending God through rejection of God's law and his love.⁷⁵

It, therefore, seems most timely that during this centenary celebration of Our Lady's Spiritual Maternity so powerfully witnessed at Fatima that we, as the People of God, in a special way acknowledge and honor the doctrine of Mary as Spiritual Mother of All Peoples in her motherly roles of mediation and intercession for the human family.

Therefore, we, as members of the Theological Commission of the International Marian Association, and in full obedience and fidelity to our Holy Father, Pope Francis, humbly request that during this 2017 Fatima centenary, and in continuity with the papal precedents of Pope Pius XI and Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Francis would kindly grant public recognition and honor to the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for her unique human cooperation with the one divine Redeemer in the work of Redemption as "Co-redemptrix with Jesus the Redeemer." We believe that a public acknowledgement of Mary's true and continuous role with Jesus in the saving work of Redemption would justly celebrate the role of humanity in God's saving plan and lead to the release of historic graces through an even more powerful exercise of Our Lady's maternal roles of intercession for the Church and for all humanity today.

January 1, 2017, Solemnity of the Mother of God

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⁷² Messages of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima, May 13, 1917, July 13, 1917; Messages of the Angel of Portugal, 1916, 1917, "Fourth Memoir," *Memoirs of Sr. Lucia*.

⁷³ October 13, 1917 Message of Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima, "Fourth Memoir," *Memoirs of Sr. Lucia*.

⁷⁴ "...Pray the Rosary every day in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, in order to obtain peace for the world and the end of the war because only she can help you..." July 13, 1917 Message of the Lady of the Rosary at Fatima, "Fourth Memoir," *Memoirs of Sr. Lucia*, 2000.

⁷⁵ Cf. July 13, 1917 message and Third part of the Secret of Fatima, released June 26, 2000 by Pope St. John Paul through the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith; "The Message of Fatima" Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, June 26, 2000.

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Letter of Dr. Robert Fastiggi in Response to the Cardinal Mueller Report

Dr. Robert Fastiggi

June 15, 2017

His Eminence Cardinal Gerhard Müller

Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

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Your Eminence,

Greetings in the Lord! I am writing first to express my heartfelt gratitude for your work as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. I am especially grateful for your explanation of the Holy Father's exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, in harmony with the full Catholic teaching on the Sacrament of Matrimony. I was very encouraged by what you said in your interview with the journal, *Il Timone*: "It is not *Amoris laetitia* that has provoked a confused interpretation, but some confused interpreters of it" (*Non è "Amoris laetitia" che ha provocato una confusa interpretazione, ma alcuni confusi interpreti di essa*).

I read with interest your interview with Father Carlos Granados, which was published in English as *The Cardinal Müller Report* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017). You bring forth so many excellent insights that I hesitate to bring up a point of disagreement. I believe, however, that I must respond to your rejection of the Marian title, Co-redemptrix (*Corredentora*), which is translated into English as "co-redeemer" on p. 133 of *The Cardinal Müller Report*. Here is the passage that I find difficult to accept.

[T]heologians and preachers should especially avoid two risks: on the one hand, that of falsely exaggerating *per excessum*, attributing to the Virgin what is not attributable to her (for example, the Church, despite Mary's privileged position on the work of salvation, does not call her "co-redeemer," because the only Redeemer is Christ and she herself has been redeemed *sublimiore modo*, as *Lumen gentium* [n. 53] says, and serves this redemption wrought exclusively by Christ); and on the other hand, to deny her *per defectum* the unique privileges that are due her by divine

decision (*Lumen gentium*, no 67)—that is dogmas such as her Immaculate Conception, her divine maternity, her perpetual virginity, and her Assumption, body and soul, to heavenly glory.

In the Spanish original of your interview, the key part of this passage reads: “*la Iglesia ... no la llama ‘corredentora’, porque el único Redentor es Cristo y ella misma ha sido redimida sublimiore modo, como dice Lumen Gentium 53, y está al servicio de esta Redención obrada exclusivamente por Cristo.*”

I understand that you are speaking in the interview as a private theologian and not as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Nevertheless, your great status as both prefect and theologian will give many people the impression that the Marian title, “Co-redemptrix,” cannot be allowed because: 1) it stands in opposition to Christ as the only Redeemer; 2) it is irreconcilable with Mary’s redemption in a more sublime manner (i.e. her Immaculate Conception); and, 3) it is a title that is not used by the Church.

I have been teaching Mariology at a major Catholic seminary for over 15 years, and I also served for two years (2104–2016) as president of the Mariological Society of America (founded in 1949 by Fr. Juniper Carol, OFM, who defended Mary as Co-redemptrix). When the question of the Marian title, “Co-redemptrix,” is brought up in my classes I always defend its proper use in deference to prior statements of the Magisterium and the title’s use by numerous saints and well-respected theologians. I, of course, remind the students that this title must be understood in such a way “that it neither takes away nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ, the one Mediator” (*Lumen gentium*, 62).

Your Eminence, with all due respect, I must point out that your theological objections to the title have been raised before, but they have been thoroughly answered by both prominent theologians and by the Magisterium itself. Christ’s status as the “only Redeemer” does not stand in opposition to Mary’s unique cooperation in the work of redemption with and under her divine Son.

The Belgian Redemptorist theologian, François Xavier Godts (1839–1929) expressed this point very well:

Through her close union with the Redeemer and through her continual sharing in all his sufferings, Mary has her part in the work of our Redemption and our salvation, a part secondary and totally subordinate to that of her Son, but no less universal; thus it can be affirmed that in every grace we receive there are the infinite merits of the blood of the Redeemer, to whose sufferings are added those of the Co-redemptrix.” F-X, Godts, *La Coré-*

demptrice, in *Mémoires et rapports du Congrès Marial tenu à Bruxelles, 8-11 septembre 1921*, vol. I [Bruxelles 1922] 157).

Pope Pius XI, articulated the same teaching in his allocution to some pilgrims from Vicenza on November 30, 1933:

By necessity, the Redeemer could not but associate His Mother with His work, and for this reason, we invoke her under the title of Co-redemptrix. (*Il Redentore non poteva, per necessità, non associare La madre Sua alla Sua opera, e per questo noi la invochiamo col titolo di Corredentrice*) She gave us the Savior, she accompanied Him in the work of Redemption as far as the Cross itself, sharing with Him the sorrows of the agony and of the death in which Jesus consummated the Redemption of all mankind (*L'Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1933, p. 1).

Mary, of course, was redeemed in a more sublime manner by her Immaculate Conception. I fail, however, to see how this prevents her unique association with her divine Son in the work of redemption. In fact, her preservation from all sin enables her to associate herself in the work of the Redeemer more intimately and more profoundly. This is why *Lumen gentium*, 56 teaches that Mary, “impeded by no sin” (*nullo retardata peccato*), became, by her obedience, “the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race” (*et sibi et universo generi humano causa facta est salutis*; cf. St. Irenaeus. *Ad Haer.* III, 22, 4; PG 7, 959).

Your Eminence, if the Marian title, “Co-redemptrix,” undermines Christ’s work as the one Redeemer of the human race, I would also reject it. I would likewise reject the title if it suggests an equivalence of Mary’s human *co-operation* in redemption with the efficacy of Christ’s divine-human *operation* in redemption. The title, however, has not been understood in this way. Fr. Ludwig Ott, in his well-known text, *The Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, offers this comment on the Marian title, Coredemptrix:

The title *Coredemptrix* = Coredemptress, which has been current since the fifteenth century, and which also appears in some official Church documents under Pius X (cf. AAS 6 [1914] 108), must not be conceived in the sense of an equation of the efficacy of Mary with the redemptive activity of Christ, the sole Redeemer of humanity (1 Tim. 2, 5).

The German original can be found in Ludwig Ott, *Grundriss der Dogmatik* 11th ed. (Bonn: Nova et Vetera, 2010), p. 310:

Der seit dem 15. Jh gebrauchte Titel *Corredemptrix*=*Miterlöserin*, der unter Pius X auch in einigen amtlichen kirchlichen Dokumenten erscheint (vgl. DH 3370; DR 1978a note) darf nicht im Sinne einer Gleichstellung der Wirksamkeit Mariens mit der Erlösertätigkeit Christi, des einzigen Erlösers der Menschheit (1 Tim 2, 5), aufgefasst werden.

A similar explanation of the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, is found in the May 18, 2014 letter of Archbishop Juan José Asenjo Pelegrina of Seville, Spain, who uses the title Coredemptrix (*Corredentora*) three times in this single document. The Archbishop, however, makes it clear that Mary's role as *Corredentora* depends upon Christ, the one Mediator:

Efectivamente, la Santísima Virgen ocupa un lugar central en la historia de nuestra salvación, en el misterio de Cristo y de la Iglesia y, por ello, la devoción a María pertenece a la entraña misma de la vida cristiana. Ella es la madre de Jesús. Ella, como peregrina de la fe, aceptó humilde y confiada su misteriosa maternidad, haciendo posible la encarnación del Verbo. Ella fue la primera oyente de su palabra, su más fiel y atenta discípula, la encarnación más auténtica del Evangelio. Ella, por fin, al pie de la Cruz, nos recibe como hijos y se convierte, por un misterioso designio de la Providencia de Dios, en **corredentora** de toda la humanidad. Por ser madre y **corredentora**, es medianera de todas las gracias necesarias para nuestra salvación, nuestra santificación y nuestra fidelidad, lo cual en absoluto no oscurece la única mediación de Cristo. Todo lo contrario. Esta mediación maternal es querida por Cristo y se apoya y depende de los méritos de Cristo y de ellos obtiene toda su eficacia (LG 60).

La maternidad de María y su misión de **corredentora** siguen siendo actuales: ella asunta y gloriosa en el cielo, sigue actuando como madre, con una intervención activa, eficaz y benéfica en favor de nosotros sus hijos, impulsando, vivificando y dinamizando nuestra vida cristiana. Esta ha sido la doctrina constante de la Iglesia a través de los siglos, enseñada por los Padres de la Iglesia, vivida en la liturgia, celebrada por los escritores medievales, enseñada por los teólogos y muy especialmente por los Papas de los dos últimos siglos.

I know that some people accept the legitimacy of the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, but favor other terms to avoid false understandings. If this were your

position, Your Eminence, I would not be writing to you. In *The Cardinal Müller Report*, however, you explicitly state that the title, Co-redemptrix, *cannot* be attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and you suggest that this title involves a false exaggeration.

I believe the title, Co-redemptrix, has been and can be appropriately applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary. I also believe that the suppression of this title would create many unnecessary difficulties. My reasons can be summarized as follows:

1. Many saints and blessed of the Catholic Church have spoken of Mary as Co-redemptrix. If this title is a false exaggeration, then we would need to say that St. Brigid of Sweden, Blessed John Henry Newman, St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe, St. Leopold Mandic, St. José Maria Escrivà, St. Teresa of Calcutta, and many others were guilty of false exaggeration in using this title.

2. If the title, Co-redemptrix cannot be attributed to Mary, then the Sacred Congregation for Rites in 1908 was wrong to refer to Mary as “the merciful Co-redemptrix of the human race” (*misericordem humani generis Conredemptricem: Acta Sanctae Sedis* 41 [1908], p. 409). If this title involves a false exaggeration, then the Holy Office in 1913 was guilty of promoting this false exaggeration when it approved a prayer invoking the Blessed Mary as “our Co-redemptrix” (*corredemptricis nostrae: Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 5 [1913], p. 364). Likewise, the Holy Office would have perpetuated this same false exaggeration in 1914 when it sanctioned a prayer with an indulgence attached invoking Mary as “the Co-redemptrix of the human race” (*corredentricem del genere umano: Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 6 [1914], p. 108).

3. If the title, Co-redemptrix, cannot be attributed to Mary, then Pope Pius XI was wrong to refer to her as Co-redemptrix on three separate occasions (cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, Dec. 1, 1933; *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 25, 1934, p. 1; *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 29-30, 1935, p. 1). Similarly, St. John Paul II would have also been wrong to speak publicly of Mary as the Co-redemptrix at least six times (cf. *Allocution to the Sick, September 8, 1982, Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, Vol 3, 1982, 404; General Audience, December 10, 1982, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Dec. 18, 1982, p. 2; General Audience, Nov. 4, 1984, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., Nov. 12, 1984, p. 1; *Homily at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Alborada*, Guayaquil, Ecuador, Jan. 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., March 11, 1985; World Youth Day Allocution, May 31, 1985, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., April 9, 1985, p. 12; Allocution to the Volunteers for the Sick at Lourdes, March 24, 1990, *Insegnamenti*, XIII/1, 1990, 743:1; *Allocution on Sixth Centenary Canonization of St. Brigid of Sweden*, October 6, 1991, *L'Osservatore Romano*, English ed., October 14, 1991, p. 4).

4. To regard the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, as a false exaggeration would mean that Vatican II's 1962 *Schema Constitutionis Dogmaticae De Beata Maria Virgine*

Matre Dei et Matre Hominum, was promoting a false theology when, in its footnote 11, it states that “the compassion of Mary has a connection with the redemption in such a way that she may rightly be called co-redemptrix” (*compassio Mariae connexionem habet cum redemptione, talique modo ut ipsa inde merito dici possit corredemptrix*: *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 104). This *schema*, with its footnote endorsing the rightful use of the Marian title, *corredemptrix*, was approved by St. John XXIII on Nov. 10, 1962 and distributed among the conciliar Fathers on November 23, 1962 (cf. Frederick Jelly, O.P., “The Theological Context of and Introduction to Chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*,” *Marian Studies* XXXVII [1986], 47). This 1962 Marian schema also has an extensive footnote 16, which explains the history of the terms *Redemptrix* and *Co-redemptrix* as applied to Mary. This footnote refers to the approval of the Marian title, *Co-redemptrix*, by the Holy Office during the pontificate of St. Pius X and the use of this title by Pius XI on three separate occasions (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 108).

The 1962 schema refers to Mary as *Co-redemptrix* in two footnotes even though it avoids the term in the actual text of the schema. The reason for this avoidance is given in the *praenotanda* that accompanied the schema of 1962. In the *praenotanda*, we are told that: “Certain terms and expressions used by Roman Pontiffs have been omitted, which, although most true in themselves (*in se verissima*), may be difficult for the separated brethren (such as the Protestants) to understand. Among such words the following may be enumerated: ‘Coredemptrix of the human race’ [St. Pius X, Pius XI]; ‘Reparatrix of the whole world’ [Leo XIII] ... etc.” (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, Volumen I, Periodus Prima, Pars IV* [Vatican City, 1971], p. 99). Thus, the Marian title, *Co-redemptrix*, was omitted from the 1962 schema—and *Lumen gentium*, chapter eight—because it was thought difficult for the separated brethren to understand. It was *not* omitted because it was a false exaggeration. On the contrary, it was considered “most true” in itself. If we follow a hermeneutic of continuity, I do not understand how a title that was considered “most true” in 1962 can now be considered a false exaggeration in 2017.

Even if Vatican II chose not to refer to Mary as *Co-redemptrix*, there is no indication that it wished to suppress the use of the term by Catholics. If this were so, how could St. John Paul II speak of Mary as *Co-redemptrix* on multiple occasions? Moreover, *Lumen gentium*, 54 states that Vatican II “does not, however, have it in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. **Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her**, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest

after Christ and yet very close to us.” Certainly, one of the opinions lawfully propounded in Catholic schools about Mary is the one affirmed in footnote 11 of the 1962 Marian schema, viz., “*compassio Mariae connexionem habet cum redemptione, talique modo ut ipsa inde merito dici possit corredemptrix.*” To forbid the use of the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, I believe, goes against the lawful freedom affirmed in *Lumen gentium*, 54.

It should also be noted that some prominent theologians have argued that Vatican II’s *Lumen gentium* affirms the doctrine of Mary as Co-redemptrix without using the term. Among these are Jean Galot, S.J and Georges Cottier, O.P., the former theologian of the papal household (cf. Galot in *La Civiltà Cattolica* [1994] III: 236-237 and Cottier, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, June 4, 2002).

5. To regard the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, as a false exaggeration stands in opposition to the various religious communities and associations that use the title. Some of these received episcopal approval before Vatican II and others after the council. Mention can be made of the following:

I) Congregation of Mother Coredemptrix/ *Congregation de Mère Corrédemptrice*, a Vietnamese religious community approved by the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in 1953 (see F. Rizzoli, “Madre Corredentrice,” in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione* Vol. 5 [Roma: Edizione Paoline, 1973, p. 817).

II) Centro María Corredentora, founded in Madrid, Spain in 1953; run by the Sisters of Our Lady of Compassion.

III) Congregazione Figlie Maria SS. Corredentrice: founded in Catania, Italy in 1953; approved in 1964.

IV) Pia Associazione di Maria SS. Corredentrice: approved by the Archbishop of Reggio Calabria, Italy, in 1984.

V) Hijas de Maria Immaculada y Corredentora (Lima, Peru): founded in 1978, approved in 1980.

VI) Instituto de Misioneras de Maria Corredentora (Ecuador): founded in 1964, approved in 1969.

VII) Asociación de Fieles al Servicio de María Corredentora, Reina de la Paz, Barquisimeto, (Venezuela): founded in 1992 and approved then by the Archbishop of Barquisimeto, Venezuela.

In addition, mention should be made of the seminary of the Society of St. Pius X [SSPX] located in Moreno, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The name of this seminary is Seminario Nuestra Señora Corredentora. As you know, discussions are underway seeking full incorporation of the SSPX into the Catholic Church as a personal

prelature of the Roman Pontiff. If the title, “*Corredentora*,” is unacceptable, then another obstacle would be placed in the path toward the full integration of the SSPX into the life of the Church.

I know some people have suggested “Mother of the Redeemer” as an adequate substitute for the title, Co-redemptrix.” The two terms, however, are not equivalent. Certainly, Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer, but Vatican II clearly teaches that her association with Christ in the work of redemption went beyond that of merely giving birth to the Redeemer. *Lumen gentium*, 56 teaches that Mary, “embracing God’s salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, 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. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she ‘being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race’.” When Cardinal König, on Oct. 23, 1963, spoke in favor of integrating the Marian schema into the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, he said this would be a way of better highlighting the Blessed Virgin Mary as “the most sublime cooperatrix of Christ in both the accomplishment and the propagation of the work of salvation through his grace” (*Beata Maria Virgo potest in tali capite vel schemate integrato optimi proponi tamquam sublimissima Christi ex eius gratia cooperatrix in opere salutis et perficiendo et propaganda*; see *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* Vol. II Periodus Seconda, Pars III [Vatican City, 1972], 344).

The mind of Vatican II was not simply to affirm Mary as “the Mother of the Redeemer,” but to affirm her active collaboration with Christ in the work of salvation. This active cooperation can be rightfully expressed either by the title Co-redemptrix or by Cardinal König’s description of Mary as the “*sublimissima Christi ex eius gratia cooperatrix in opere salutis*.” The meaning, I believe, is the same with both expressions.

Your Eminence, I apologize for going on for so long, but I wanted to express my reasons as clearly as I could. I know that the Marian title, Co-redemptrix, has been the source of controversy, and many believe it would not be opportune to define Mary as Co-redemptrix because the term is considered ambiguous (cf. 1996 statement of the Theological Commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy on the request for the definition of the dogma of Mary as Mediatrix, Coredemptrix and Advocate). There is a big difference, though, between saying that the title Co-redemptrix is ambiguous and saying it is a false exaggeration. If some believe the title is ambiguous, then it should be properly explained. I hope

and pray that you or Pope Francis will issue a statement on Mary's co-redemptive role that explains the proper meaning and acceptability of the term, Co-redemptrix.

My own position is that of Fr. J. A. De Aldama, S.J., expressed in the well-respected *Sacrae Theologiae Summa* (Madrid, 1950). In this *Summa*, Fr. De Aldama argues that Mary's cooperation in bringing about redemption—at least in a mediate way (*saltem mediate*)—is *de fide* (p. 372). He also states that Mary's immediate cooperation in the work of redemption is “a doctrine that is more in conformity with cited texts of the Roman Pontiffs” (*doctrina conformior textibus citatis S.S. Pontificum*). As for the title “Coredemptrix,” Fr. De Aldama maintains that “it is certain that it can be correctly used and that it's not permitted to doubt its appropriateness” (“*Quod titulus Corredemptricis recte usurpetur, est certum; nec licet dubitare de eius opportunitate*,” (cf. *Sacrae Theologiae Summa*, Vol III, Tract. II, 372).

Your Eminence, please know that my disagreement with you over “Co-redemptrix” in no way hinders my gratitude for your work and reverence for your person. I hope that you will give my thoughts some consideration. I only wish to serve Christ and His Church, entrusting myself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Thank you for listening to my concerns.

In Cordibus Jesu et Mariae,

Robert Fastiggi, Ph.D.

— Professor of Systematic Theology, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI USA

— former president of the Mariological Society of America (2014–2016)

— member of the Theological Commission of the International Marian Association

P.S. I have attached a copy of the 1962 Marian schema from Vatican II for your reference.

A Response to the Declaration of the Commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy¹

MSGR. ARTHUR B. CALKINS

Vatican Ecclesia Dei, Emeritus

It is now over twenty years since the release of the the declaration of the “ad hoc” committee of the Pontifical International Marian Academy regarding the inadvisability of a dogmatic definition by the Pope on Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate. One of the most important tasks of the academy is to advise the Holy See on matters Marian and many petitions were arriving in Rome asking for a definition. The official response of the academy, which had met in solemn session in Częstochowa, Poland in August of 1996, along with a lengthy article authored by Father Salvatore Perrella, O.S.M. as a commentary on that declaration was published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican's semi-official newspaper in its issue of June 4, 1997.

I. Not Official Documents of the Holy See

The first and most important fact to be kept in mind about these two documents is that they are not official documents of the Holy See and one will look for them in vain in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, although they were published in *L'Osservatore Romano* as well as in the weekly English and other language editions of that paper.² These documents do not represent a broad spectrum of the opinion of the members of the Pontifical International Marian Academy, of which I also am a member, nor, insofar as I am aware, was there an open, fair and honest consideration of the issues involved. The initial polling was taken without any representation

¹ A previous version of this article was originally published in *Contemporary Insights on a Fifth Marian Dogma Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations III* (Goleta, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 2000), 125-134. But this article includes updated revisions.

² “Richiesta della definizione del dogma di Maria Mediatrix, Corredentrice e Avvocata: Dichiarazione della Commissione teologica del Congresso del Częstochowa”; “Un nuovo dogma mariano?” Salvatore Perrella, O.S.M., “La cooperazione di Maria all’opera della Redenzione: Attualità di una questione,” *L'Osservatore Romano* [= OR] (4 June 1997), 10-11. These were duly published in the English edition as well: “Declaration of the Theological Commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy: Request for the definition of the dogma of Mary as Mediatrix, Coredemptrix and Advocate,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly English edition, (first numeral – cumulative edition number, second numeral – page number) [= ORE] 1494:12; “A new Marian dogma?” ORE 1497:10; Salvatore M. Perrella, O.S.M., “Mary’s co-operation in work of Redemption: Present State of a Question,” ORE 1498:9-10.

by those who are in favor of the definition or any serious debate. Instead of presenting the question to a study group well informed on the topic, it was presented, with no previous notice to most of the participants, at an “ecumenical round table,” consisting of 18 Catholics, three Orthodox, one Anglican and one Lutheran. Subsequent commentaries were written as propaganda with little concern for the facts of the issues at stake. I am afraid that these documents are classic instances of the manipulation of the media and numerous other sectors in the Church by special interest groups in order to interpret the magisterium exclusively from their perspective, an exploitation which has been going on since the time of the Second Vatican Council and which needs to be exposed for what it is. It is noteworthy that, insofar as I have been able to determine, the declaration is not to be found on the website of the Holy See, on the website of the Pontifical International Marian Academy (*Pontificia Accademia Mariana Internazionale*, also known by the acronym PAMI) or anywhere on the internet as of October 21, 2017. Yet in a letter of September 27, 2010 addressed to Archbishop Ramon Argüelles of Lipa, Philippines, Cardinal Gerhard Müller, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, urged him “to promote authentic Marian devotion within [his] Archdiocese, adhering to the Częstochowa Statement, which clearly outlines a proper understanding of the usage of appropriate Marian titles.”³ This was occasioned by the fact that in the alleged apparitions that took place in Lipa in the late 1940s Our Lady is alleged to have identified herself as “Mediatrice of all Grace.”

Before going any further let us provide the document in question for the public record:

Declaration of the Theological Commission of the Pontifical International Marian Academy

Request for the definition of the dogma of Mary as Mediatrix, Coredeematrix and Advocate of the Holy

The 12th International Mariological Congress held at Częstochowa (Poland) in August, was asked by the Holy See to study the possibility and the opportuneness of a definition of the Marian titles of Mediatrix, Coredeematrix and Advocate, as is being requested of the Holy See by certain circles. A commission was established, composed of 15 theologians chosen for their specific preparation in this area, so that together they could discuss and analyze the question through mature reflection. In addition to their theological competence, care was also taken to ensure the greatest possi-

³ Letter of Cardinal Gerhard Müller to Archbishop Ramón Argüelles of 11 December 2015, Prot. N. 226/1949, 13.

ble geographical diversity among the members, so that any possible consensus would become especially significant. It was also sought to enrich the study group by adding, as external members, some non-Catholic theologians who were present at the Congress. The Commission arrived at a twofold conclusion:

1. The titles, as proposed, are ambiguous, as they can be understood in very different ways. Furthermore, the theological direction taken by the Second Vatican Council, which did not wish to define any of these titles, should not be abandoned. The Second Vatican Council did not use the title “Coredemptrix,” and uses “Mediatrix” and “Advocate” in a very moderate way (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62). In fact from the time of Pope Pius XII, the term “Coredemptrix” has not been used by the papal Magisterium in its significant documents. There is evidence that Pope Pius XII himself intentionally avoided using it. With respect to the title “Mediatrix,” the history of the question should not be forgotten: in the first decades of this century the Holy See entrusted the study of the possibility of its definition to three different commissions the result of which was that the Holy See decided to set the question aside.
2. Even if the titles, were assigned a content which could be accepted as belonging to the deposit of the faith, the definition of these titles, however, in the present theological situation would be lacking in clarity, as such titles and the doctrines inherent in them still require further study in a renewed Trinitarian, ecclesiological and anthropological perspective. Finally, the theologians, especially the non-Catholics, were sensitive to the ecumenical difficulties which would be involved in such a definition.

The Commission included Fr Pavao Melada, O.F.M. and Fr Stefano Cecchin, O.F.M., the President and Secretary respectively of the Pontifical International Marian Academy, Fr. Cándido Pozo, S.J. (Spain), Fr. Ignacio M. Calabuig O.S.M. (Marianum – Rome), Fr Jesús Castellano Cervera, O.C.D. (Teresianum – Rome), Fr Franz Courth, S.A.C. (Germany), Fr Stefano De Fiores, S.M.M. (Italy), Fr. Miguel Angel Delgado (Mexico), Fr. Manuel Felicio da Rocha (Portugal), Fr. Georges Gharib (Melkite – Syria), Fr René Laurentin (France), Fr Jan Pach, O.S.P.P.E. (Poland), Fr. Adalbert Rebić (Croatia), Fr Jean Rivain (France), Fr Johannes Rothen, S.M. (USA), Fr Er Ermanno Toniolo, O.S.M. (Italy), Mons Teofil

*Sindy (Poland), Fr. Anton Ziegenaus (Germany), Canon Roger Greenacre (Anglican – England), Dr Hans Christoph Schmidt-Lauber (Lutheran – Austria), Fr Ghennadios Limouris (Orthodox – Constantinople), Fr. Jean Kawaak (Orthodox – Syria), Prof. Constantin Charalampidis (Orthodox – Greece).*⁴

Returning for a moment to Cardinal Müller’s statement cited above, I do not see how this declaration “clearly outlines a proper understanding of the usage of appropriate Marian titles.” It makes vague statements, but by no means clarifies anything except “ecumenical concerns.” Since my intention here is to outline a yet broader history of the question, I cannot respond to the vague statements in the declaration, except to say that I reject entirely the notion that the Second Vatican Council took a direction away from such titles and what they represent. This is simply unsupported and refuses to look at the broader perspective of the battles fought over *Lumen Gentium*, chapter eight, the council’s fundamental document on Our Lady.⁵ It is, in fact, the interpretation written by those who didn’t manage to win the most definitive battle.⁶

II. A Clarification on the Meaning of Coredemptrix

The term Coredemptrix usually requires some initial explanation to the English-speaking public because often the prefix “co” immediately conjures up visions of complete equality.

For instance, a co-signer of a check or a co-owner of a house is considered a co-equal with the other signer or owner. Thus the first fear of many is that describing Our Lady as Coredemptrix puts her on the same level as her Divine Son and implies that she is “Redeemer” in the same way that he is, thus reducing Jesus “to being half of a team of redeemers.” In the Latin language from which the term Coredemptrix comes, however, the meaning is always that Mary’s cooperation or collaboration in the redemption is secondary, subordinate, dependent on that of Christ – and yet for all that – something that God “freely wished to accept ... as

⁴ This Declaration was published in the English weekly edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* on 4 June 1997, 12.

⁵ Cf. Serafino M. Lanzetta, *Vatican II, A Pastoral Council: Hermeneutics of Council Teaching* Trans. Liam Kelly (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2016), 363-419, 451-453.

⁶ This had to do with the tension between the Christotypical and ecclesiotypical approaches to Mariology and the battle for and against Marian mediation. Although both approaches were integrated into the final text, the Christotypical and coredemptive strains are still dominant. Cf. Lanzetta 386-387, 396, 416-419; Arthur Burton Calkins (ed.), *Totus Tuus: Il Magistero Mariano di Giovanni Paolo II* (Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 2006), 17-22.

constituting an unneeded, but yet wonderfully pleasing part of that one great price” paid by His Son for world’s redemption. As Dr. Mark Miravalle points out:

The prefix “co” does not mean equal, but comes from the Latin word “cum” which means “with.” The title “Coredemptrix applied to the Mother of Jesus *never places Mary on a level of equality with Jesus Christ, the divine Lord of all, in the saving process of* humanity’s redemption. Rather, it denotes Mary’s singular and unique sharing with her Son in the saving work of redemption for the human family. The Mother of Jesus *participates* in the redemptive work of *her Saviour Son, who alone could reconcile humanity with the Father in his glorious divinity and humanity.*⁷

Clearly, then, what those who favor a papal definition want is not a dogmatic statement that Mary is the fourth person of the Blessed Trinity or that she is equal to Jesus (this obvious nonsense has already been ascribed to them in the secular and Catholic press!). What they seek is an official recognition that Mary participated in the redemption of the world in a way that has no parallel with any other human creature. Classically in theology and in the teaching of the Popes this is expressed by the word Coredemptrix.

III. Marian Coredemption and the Second Vatican Council

The first line of the commentary gives away one of the key strategies of the opponents of the definition: make those who favor the definition look like enemies of the Second Vatican Council:

From whatever perspective it is considered, the movement that is petitioning for a dogmatic definition of the Marian titles of Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate is not in line with the direction of the great Mariological text of the Second Vatican Council, chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*.⁸

In response to this gratuitous misrepresentation I would like to make four points.

1. Chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* clearly teaches the doctrine of Mary as Coredemptrix in numbers 56, 58 and 61. Here is a very important text from 58:

The Blessed Virgin Mary ... faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with

⁷ Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., *Mary: Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1993), xv.

⁸ OR of 4 June 1997, 10 [ORE 1497:10].

the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her.⁹

This text clearly uses language from earlier papal teaching on Mary's intimate collaboration in the mystery of the redemption as does the following quotation from 61:

In the designs of divine Providence she [Mary] was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord. She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls.¹⁰

In both of these texts we can see the strong emphasis on Mary as the most intimate collaborator in the work of our redemption.

2. Why did the Council not use the word Coredemptrix, even though many Bishops came to the Council seeking a statement on Mary as Coredemptrix and Mediatrix? This comes from a highly debatable strategy meant to favor ecumenical dialogue. In the *Prænotanda* or prologue of the first draft document which would eventually become chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium* we find this statement:

Certain expressions and words used by Supreme Pontiffs have been omitted, which, in themselves are absolutely true, but which may only be understood with difficulty by separated brethren (in this case Protestants). Among such words may be numbered the following: "Coredemptrix of the human race..." [Pius X, Pius XI]¹¹

⁹ *Ita etiam B. Virgo ... suamque unionem cum Filio fideliter sustinuit usque ad crucem, ubi non sine divino consilio stetit, vehementer cum Unigenito suo condoluit et sacrificio Eius se materno animo sociavit, victimae de se genitae immolationi amanter consentiens.*

¹⁰ ... *operi Salvatoris singulari prorsus modo cooperata est, oboedientia, fide, spe et flagrante caritate, ad vitam animarum supernaturalem restaurandam.*

¹¹ Ermanno M. Toniolo, *La Beata Maria Vergine nel Concilio Vaticano II* (Rome: Centro di Cultura Mariana «Madre della Chiesa», 2004), 98-99 (my trans.).

One of the two principal drafters of *Lumen Gentium* chapter eight, Father Karlo Balić, O.F.M., was constrained to draft this statement,¹² even though he was a staunch supporter of Marian coredemption. These were the ground rules which the Council Fathers were constrained to follow. A number of theologians would argue that such an approach has led to a “lowest common denominator” kind of ecumenism. The late Monsignor Brunero Gherardini, a distinguished professor of ecumenical theology, points out that, with or without the use of the term Coredemptrix, the Protestant observers at the Council recognized just as readily the Catholic position on Mary’s participation in the redemption. They see any human participation in the work of man’s salvation, however secondary and subordinate, as contrary to Luther’s principle of *solus Christus* [Christ alone] and thus “a robbery from God and from Christ.”¹³ Hence in elaborating the Church’s teaching on Mary’s collaboration in the redemption, we are dealing with more than just the possible justification of the term Coredemptrix, but a fundamental datum of Catholic theology, a matter which will not be facily dealt with in ecumenical dialogue by simply substituting one word or phrase with another which seems more neutral.

3. Pope Saint John Paul II, a Father of the Second Vatican Council, spoke on December 13, 1995 of the desire of some of the Council Fathers for a more explicit treatment of Mary as Coredemptrix and Mediatrix in a way that is not at all negative, as is the declaration made in the commentary stating that “The current movement for a definition is not manifestly in line with the direction of Vatican II.” Here is what the Pope said:

During the Council sessions, many Fathers wished further to enrich Marian doctrine with other statements on Mary’s role in the work of salvation. The particular context in which Vatican II’s Mariological debate took place did not allow these wishes, although substantial and widespread, to be accepted, but the Council’s entire discussion of Mary remains vigorous and balanced, and the topics themselves, though not fully defined, received significant attention in the overall treatment.

Thus, the hesitation of some Fathers regarding the title of Mediatrix did not prevent the Council from using this title once, and from stating in other terms Mary’s mediating role from her con-

¹² Cf. Dinko Aračić, *La Dottrina Mariologica negli Scritti di Carlo Balić* (Rome: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1980), 100-101, 111, 116-133, 203-226. The question remains as to who “constrained” Father Balić to draft this statement.

¹³ Cf. Brunero Gherardini, “Unity and Coredemption” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – III: Maria, Mater Unitatis. Acts of the Third International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2003), 55-62.

sent to the Angel's message to her motherhood in the order of grace (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 62). Furthermore, the Council asserts her co-operation "in a wholly singular way" in the work of restoring supernatural life to souls (ibid., n. 61).¹⁴

This is an astute observation made by one who has continued to meditate on and develop these very themes. To my knowledge, it is the first official public acknowledgement on the part of a Pope of the currents at the Council which shaped the writing of chapter 8 of *Lumen Gentium*. It makes graceful reference to the Fathers who "wished further to enrich Marian doctrine with other statements on Mary's role in the work of salvation" without criticizing them in any way. It also refers to Mary's role as Coredemptrix (cooperation in the work of restoring supernatural life to souls) and Mediatrix.

4. It is clear that the author(s) of the commentary would like to make it appear that the Second Vatican Council carved a position in granite from which the Church may never deviate in the future. First of all, no Council has the right to bind the faithful in matters that do not compromise faith or morals. But, secondly—and even more importantly—the Council Fathers explicitly stated in n.54 of *Lumen Gentium* that the Council

does not intend to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us.

Interestingly, up until the very vigil of the Council the intimately related questions about Mary's active role in the work of our redemption as Coredemptrix and Mediatrix were reaching an ever higher level of clarity and maturity among both theologians and members of the faithful.¹⁵ At the same time, however, opposition was beginning to emerge. We have already noted that "ecumenical sensitivity" would be presented as a prime reason for avoiding this topic or dealing with it obliquely and there was also emerging among various influential Bishops and their

¹⁴ *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II* XVIII/2 (1995) 1369-1370 [ORE 1421:13].

¹⁵ Cf. Salvatore M. Perrella, OSM, I «*Vota*» e I «*Consilia*» dei Vescovi Italiani sulla Mariologia e sulla Corredenzione nella Fase Antipreparatoria del Concilio Vaticano II (Rome: Edizioni «Marianum», 1994).

periti (experts) distaste for the general language of mediation as it had been traditionally applied to Mary.¹⁶

Given this conflict which came out into the open on the Council floor, the above declaration is particularly significant. It makes it clear, beyond any doubt, that the Council Fathers went on record as not wishing to close any doors on the free discussion of Marian theology, even if they were not ready to make explicit declarations on some matters which had been largely “in possession” and then subsequently became contested, such as Mary’s active collaboration in the work of our redemption.

In continuing to respond to the declaration by select members of the Pontifical International Marian Academy regarding the advisability of a dogmatic definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate and to the subsequent commentary supporting that statement, I am well aware that it requires much more time and patience to correct misleading impressions than to make them.

In order to make the case for the definition, one must proceed carefully and give his sources so that they may be judged independently. I know that this will also require a certain concentration on the part of the reader as well. But I believe that such application on my part and yours is important because what is at stake is very important. It is not just a matter of conferring new titles on the Mother of God as if offering her new “jewels for her crown,” but of coming to grips with the magnitude of the role which God has given her in our salvation and what He expects of us as well. May the Holy Spirit guide those who ponder the following facts after the example of Mary herself (cf. Lk 2:19, 51)!

IV. “Term not used by Papal Magisterium”?

The unsigned commentary printed on 4 June 1997 in the daily Italian edition of *L’Osservatore Romano* informs us that “from the time of Pope Pius XII, the term Coredemptrix has not been used by the papal Magisterium in its significant documents.” This statement raises some important and legitimate questions.

1. Was the term used by the papal Magisterium before the time of Pius XII? Yes, it was. The word “Coredemptrix,” which has a five hundred-year-old history in theology as a way of speaking about Mary’s unique collaboration in the work of our Redemption, made its preliminary appearance in official pronouncements of Roman Congregations during the reign of Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914). These may be found in the *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* (referred to as *AAS*, the official publication of

¹⁶ Cf. Lanzetta xxx-xxxi, 377-396; Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D., *The Rhine Flows into the Tiber: A History of Vatican II* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1985), 90-95, 153-159, 240-243.

the Acts of the Apostolic See). While St. Pius X did not sign these documents, they were promulgated on the basis of his authority. Pope Pius XI did explicitly refer to Mary as Coredemptrix in allocutions to pilgrims and in a radio message on 28 April 1935 for the closing of the Holy Year at Lourdes. On the foundation of this usage the term and the exploration of its meaning became ever frequent among theologians and Mariologists up to the eve of the Second Vatican Council.

2. Has the term been used by any subsequent Pope? Yes, the word “Coredemptrix” or “coredemptive” has been used at least six times by Pope John Paul II in speaking of Mary’s intimate cooperation in the work of our Redemption. He has also used the word “coredeemer” or “coredemption” at least three times in speaking of the on-going collaboration of Christians in the work of Redemption.

V. “Marginal and Devoid of Doctrinal Weight”?

The unsigned commentary states that “the term Coredemptrix has not been used by the papal Magisterium in its significant documents” and then goes on to admit that it may be found “here and there, in papal writings which are marginal and therefore devoid of doctrinal weight.” Before going further, let’s have a look at paragraph 25 of the Second Vatican Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, a capital text on the Pope’s Magisterium or teaching office:

This loyal submission of the will and intellect must be given, in a special way, to the authentic teaching authority [magisterium] of the Roman Pontiff, even when he does not speak *ex cathedra* in such wise, indeed, that his supreme teaching authority be acknowledged with respect, and that one sincerely adhere to decisions made by him, conformably with his manifest mind and intention, which is made know principally either (1) by the character of the documents in question, or (2) by the frequency with which a certain doctrine is proposed, or (3) by the manner in which the doctrine is formulated.

On the basis of a careful analysis of this text I have argued in my book *Totus Tuus* that the Pope’s teaching on consecration or entrustment to Mary forms an important component of his “ordinary magisterium” and that he has brought this doctrine to a new level of importance.¹⁷ I believe that a similar case may be made

¹⁷ Arthur Burton Calkins, *Totus Tuus: Pope Saint John Paul II’s Program of Consecration and Entrustment* second edition, revised and brought up to the end of the Pontificate (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2017), 315-324.

for his teaching on Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate and have continued to do so.¹⁸

Now does it not seem somewhat ironic – not to say arrogant – that an anonymous writer in the Vatican daily newspaper should cavalierly dismiss the Pope’s daily exercise of his teaching office and that of his predecessors as “marginal and devoid of doctrinal weight”? Could this incredible exercise in undermining papal teaching be more plausibly explained by the fact that the declaration and two commentaries on it were published while the Holy Father was in Poland?

The question which I would like to pose here is simply this: What should we more likely consider to be “marginal and devoid of doctrinal weight”: the Pope’s exercise of his ordinary magisterium or the supposed superior wisdom of an author or authors who hide behind the cover of anonymity?

VI. The Present Blockade

We have already noted that the first block against the conciliar teaching on Marian Coredemption and Mediation was placed in the *Praenotanda* to what eventually became chapter eight of *Lumen Gentium*. Despite that, however, the Second Vatican Council’s teaching on Marian Coredemption (without using the word) is quite strong, especially if one reads all of the references in the footnotes, thanks to Father Balić. On the other hand the teaching on Mary’s role as Mediatrix with the Mediator in *Lumen Gentium* 60-62 is helpful, but minimal and does not reach the level of the previous and subsequent papal magisterium.

The second obstruction was the so-called Częstochowa Declaration made in August of 1996, but only published in June of 1997. It is not a document that manifests any depth or attempts to come to terms with the historical development of Mary’s active participation in the work of the Redemption in the Catholic tradition, especially in the second millennium. Rather it bears the tell-tale sign of manipulation in the name of ecumenism, but it has served the purpose of giving those in

¹⁸ Arthur Burton Calkins, “Pope John Paul II’s Teaching on Marian Coredemption,” *Miles Immaculatae* XXXII (Luglio/Dicembre 1996) 474-508; “Pope John Paul II’s Teaching on Marian Coredemption” in Mark I. Miravalle, S.T.D., (ed.), *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate, Theological Foundations II: Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing Company, 1997) 113-147; “Pope John Paul II’s Ordinary Magisterium on Marian Coredemption: Consistent Teaching and More Recent Perspectives” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – II: Acts of the Second International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2002) 1-36; also published in *Divinitas* XLV «Nova Series» (2002) 153-185; “Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, in the Papal Magisterium of Pope John Paul II” in *Mary at the Foot of the Cross – VII: Coredemptrix, Therefore Mediatrix of All Graces. Acts of the Seventh International Symposium on Marian Coredemption* (New Bedford, MA: Academy of the Immaculate, 2008), 17-63.

high places in the Church an instrument to continue the blockade inaugurated in the *Prænotanda* despite what the council document actually said.

The third restriction put in the way of the recognition of our Lady's role of active collaboration in the work of the Redemption seems less recognized, but it is being duly carried out in the halls of academe. We find it in the guidelines issued by the Pontifical International Marian Academy to orient the study of Mariology in the new millennium. These guidelines, first published in Italian in 2000 under the title of *La Madre del Signore: Memoria, Presenza, Speranza*¹⁹, were subsequently translated and then published in English under the title of *The Mother of the Lord: Memory, Presence, Hope*.²⁰ There are obviously many good points in these guidelines, but carefully planted in them are also more questionable principles. Here is an example:

Today, many theologians, with a commendable intention of deepening and making this doctrine more precise, speak of the mediation of Mary from different points of view and in new terms. *Many of the aspects of the doctrine of Mary's mediation – its nature, its scope, and its relation with other forms of subordinate mediation – are disputed among theologians*, for which reason a renewed and more profound study of these questions is necessary. *We believe that such a study should not be undertaken with the intention, terminology and images used by many theologians before Vatican II, but rather that the orientation and directives outlined in Lumen Gentium be followed.* John Paul II has often considered the co-operation of the Virgin in the Trinitarian salvific plan under the terms “the mediation of Christ” and “maternal mediation,” that is, as one aspect of Mary's universal motherhood in the order of grace. Many theologians regard this context for studying Mary's mediation as a profitable one, based on sound biblical foundations (cf. Jn 19:26-27), in accord with the *sensus fidelium*, and less subject to controversy.²¹

One immediately notices here the statement that Our Lady's mediation is disputed among theologians. The question, of course, is “Who are these theologians”? And the obvious answer is the drafters of this document. We know it from their writings. One has only to consult the late Father Stefano De Fiores' article on “Mediatrice” to discover virtually all the objectors to the traditional language of

¹⁹ Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, *La Madre del Signore Memoria Presenza Speranza. Alcune questioni attuali sulla figura e la missione della b. Vergine Maria* (Vatican City State, 2000).

²⁰ Pontifical International Marian Academy, *The Mother of the Lord: Memory, Presence, Hope* trans. Thomas A. Thompson, SM (Staten Island, NY: St Pauls, 2007).

²¹ *The Mother of the Lord*, 68-69 (emphasis my own).

Marian mediation, their objections, their refusal to give a serious hearing to those who argue in favor of the millennial tradition and language and his conclusion that a future doctrinal definition could only be based on agreement among all Christian ecclesial bodies.²² One can only ask: “Since when is the deposit of faith established by those outside of the household of Catholic faith?” The footnote appended to this statement is a declaration drawn up in Częstochowa, Poland in August of 1996 and released almost a year later in June 1997. Instead of presenting the question to a study group well informed on the topic, it was presented, with no previous notice to most of the participants, at an “ecumenical round table,” consisting of 18 Catholics, three Orthodox, one Anglican and one Lutheran. Should their statement surprise anyone? All of this was carefully orchestrated and published in *L’Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican daily newspaper of June 4, 1997, while Pope John Paul II was on an apostolic visit to Poland.

The theme continues to develop:

Genuine ecumenism does not compromise or change the *depositum fidei* on the Blessed Virgin Mary, but proposes, through shared and sincere study and dialog, to help the brothers and sisters of other Christian confessions to know the full revelation concerning Mary of Nazareth and to ponder their situation in view of our historical and cultural explanation of the image of the Virgin Mary. *We believe that it would be a serious disappointment if the current discussions on the Mother of God would be an obstacle to rather than a factor for promoting Christian unity.*

Relying on the teaching of John Paul II, we believe it opportune to recall some principles and norms which should guide theologians in mariological questions. They should follow the lines traced out in Vatican II’s decree *Unitatis redintegratio* and the constitution *Lumen Gentium*, which urge theologians to “carefully refrain from whatever might by word or deed lead the separated brethren or any others whatsoever into error about the true doctrine of the Church.” ...

This requires that Marian studies:

– avoid long-standing prejudices (through *a purification of the historical memory*) and eliminate “expressions, judgments and actions which do not represent the condition of our separated brethren

²² Stefano De Fiore, *Maria – Nuovissimo Dizionario 2* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2006), 1082-1141.

with truth and fairness and so make mutual relations with them more difficult”; ...

– refrain from imposing on brothers and sisters not in full communion with the Catholic Church “any burden beyond that which is strictly necessary (cf. Acts 15:28), a *counsel especially applicable to doctrinal matters concerning Mary which are disputed even among Catholic theologians themselves*.

– use carefully, with great surveillance, terms and formulas related to the Virgin Mary (*purification of language*). *Words or formulas which are not of ancient provenance or are not accepted by a great number of Catholic theologians do not promote mutual understanding*; moreover, they arouse grave uneasiness among our brothers and sisters who are not in full communion with the Church; it is best to use terms which express the doctrine precisely and effectively without allowing the possibility of false interpretations.²³

Of course, “Genuine ecumenism does not compromise or change the *depositum fidei* on the Blessed Virgin Mary,” but the “experts” effectively go on to imply that any teaching on Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the redemption and mediation of grace is merely an in-house dispute and would be upsetting to our separated brethren. First of all, a clear distinction needs to be made between “development of doctrine” in the Catholic Church and ecumenical dialogue. John Paul himself would point out that speaking of Mary’s active collaboration in the work of the redemption is not a new concept, but deeply rooted in the tradition and has been developing for at least a millennium and has its root in the teaching of St. Irenaeus. I deal with all of these guidelines in the second edition of *Totus Tuus* and respond to them with the teaching of Pope Saint John Paul II.²⁴ I remain convinced that his greatest single legacy to the Universal Church was his Marian magisterium and I pray that it will take deep root and overcome the spurious principles of those who wish to promote lowest-common-denominator ecumenism. Our age needs to hear the full truth about Mary as John Paul presented it.

²³ *The Mother of the Lord*, 104-106 (emphasis my own).

²⁴ *Totus Tuus*, 339-361.

Essays

On the Fittingness of the Title *Mediatrix of All Graces* as applied to the Blessed Virgin Mary

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I. Introduction

Most Protestants and even some Catholics balk at the idea of Mary and the saints interceding for us here on earth, often citing the Scriptural text which declares, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).¹ How much more chagrin and shock they must feel, then, should they hear the popular title, “Mediatrix,” applied to Mary, as is the case in popular devotion and in various ecclesial documents.

In this essay, I propose to show that the title, “Mediatrix of All Graces,” is fittingly applied to the Blessed Virgin due to her participation in Christ’s mediation, which, in her case, is a participation beyond that of any other creature, on account of her divine maternity, her special role in our redemption as the Coredemptrix and New Eve, and her spiritual motherhood of all mankind.

To demonstrate this, I will first discuss what is meant by “mediator” in general, and then, in particular, when referred to Christ in 1 Timothy 2:5, as cited above. I will also show how all Christians, and in a special way, the Most Blessed Virgin, are called to participate in Christ’s mediation. Next I will review the title of “Mediatrix” as used of the Blessed Virgin both by some of the early Church fathers and other saints, as well as in ecclesial documents up to the present date. I will speak about how this designation relates to three other Marian titles: “Mother of God,” “Coredemptrix,” and “Mother of the Church.” I will also clarify the differences between the mediation of Mary and that of Christ, as well as differences in their merit. I will then examine the causality of Our Lady and why it is important that the words, “of all graces,” be added to her title of “Mediatrix.” Finally, I will discuss briefly the question of whether Mary’s mediation should be declared a “Fifth Dogma” of the Catholic Church.

II. What it Means to be a Mediator

As mentioned, in 1 Timothy 2:5, Christ is called the “one mediator between God and men.” The Greek term used for “mediator” in this passage is *mesitēs*

¹ All Biblical references in this essay are taken from the *Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version, Second Catholic Edition (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2006).

(μεσίτης). The role of a *mesites* is explained in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* as follows: “The μεσίτης is the One who represents God to men and men to God, and brings them together.”²

St. Thomas Aquinas elucidates this definition by pointing out in the *Summa Theologiae*, “The office of a mediator is to join together and unite those between whom he mediates: for extremes are united in the mean (*medio*).”³ In other words, the mediator joins together two extremes by acting as a mean between them, i.e., as a go-between. There are, therefore, “two things in a mediator: first, that he is a mean; secondly, that he unites others.”⁴

One should note the significance Aquinas attributes to the fact that not only is the mediator a type of *representative*; he is a “*mean*”—that is, he is “distant from each extreme.”⁵ This is important, because Christ, “as man, ... is distant both from God, by nature, and from man by dignity of both grace and glory And therefore, He is most truly called Mediator, as *man*.”⁶ St. Paul also brings out this key concept when he speaks of the “mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus.” (1 Tim 2:5)⁷ In other words, it is not *as God* that Christ mediates, because, as Aquinas explains, “as God, He does not differ from the Father and the Holy Ghost in nature and power of dominion ...,”⁸ and so, could not really be a mean, i.e., distant

² *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, vol. IV (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967, reprinted 1990), s.v. “μεσίτης.”

³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas* (=STh), Part III, vol. 15 (London, Great Britain: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1913) q. 26, a. 1, resp. “...mediatoris officium proprie est coniungere eos inter quos est mediator, nam extrema uniuntur in medio.” Latin text from third part of the *Summa* is taken from S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae*, vol IV, Tertia Pars, 3rd ed. (Madrid, Spain: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1964), unless otherwise noted. NB: The first and second parts of the *Summa* is taken from a multi-volume series of *The Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. I (Scotts Valley, CA: CreateSpace; NovAntiqua, 2008); and vol. IV, (NovAntiqua, 2010), and vol. VII (NovAntiqua, 2014). Part III is taken from another multi-volume series: vol 15 (cited above), vol. 16, (London, Great Britain: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1926), vol. 17 (London, Great Britain: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1914).

⁴ Aquinas, STh, III, q. 26, a. 2, resp. “...in mediatore duo possumus considerare, primo quidem, rationem medii; secundo, officium coniungendi.”

⁵ *Ibidem*. “...distet ab utroque extremorum....”

⁶ *Ibidem*. Italics added. “...secundum quod est homo, distat et a Deo in natura, et ab hominibus in dignitate et gratiae et gloriae.... Et ideo verissime dicitur mediator secundum quod homo.”

⁷ Here, as George Montague points out, St. Paul uses the more generic Greek term, ἄνθρωπος, meaning “human being,” rather than the term, ἀνὴρ, “man as the gender-specific male.” George T. Montague, *First and Second Timothy, Titus*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 56.

⁸ Aquinas, STh, III, q. 26, a. 2, resp. “...secundum quod Deus, non differt a patre et spiritu sancto in natura et potestate domini....”

from both extremes, since as a divine person, He is completely united to the Godhead without any separation at all. That is, it is only *as man*, i.e., in his humanity, that Christ can truly be a mediator between God and the human race.

Yet, how does Christ unite men to God? The task of Christ, as mediator, appears to be two-fold: On the one hand, he “communicat[es] to men both precepts and gifts”⁹ (i.e. law and grace) from God, and on the other hand, he also “offer[s] satisfaction and prayers to God for men.”¹⁰ That is, there is a descending and ascending mediation, respectively.

This is stated in a comparable way by Emil Neubert, who explains that the two-fold office of Christ as Mediator is “first of all, to merit the grace of reconciliation for all mankind [ascending mediation]; and then, to apply this grace to each of the individuals composing the human race [descending mediation]—in other words, to give us the grace of reconciliation, first *by right* and then *in fact*. The first act Jesus accomplishes by the Redemption, the second by the distribution of graces.”¹¹ In a parallel manner, Neubert points out that “Mary’s mediation, like that of Jesus, will be twofold through her participation in the mystery of the Redemption and in the distribution of grace.”¹² In the same way, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange speaks of a “double mediation [of Mary], ascending and descending,”¹³ in which “she cooperated by satisfaction and merit in the sacrifice of the cross [ascending]; and ... does not cease to intercede for us, to obtain for us, and to distribute to us all the graces that we receive [descending].”¹⁴ I will further demonstrate this point later on.

Of course, there have been others before Christ who served as a kind of mediator in the Old Testament, with the most prominent of these being Moses. This mediatorship “is perhaps most profoundly expressed in his intercession.”¹⁵ That is, not only does Moses speak to the people on God’s behalf, teaching them all His commands (descending mediation), but when the people disobey God, Moses also intercedes for them (ascending mediation).¹⁶ However, Moses’s mediation was limited to a mediation between God and a particular people at a particular time, i.e., Israel at the time of the Exodus. With the advent of Christ, this mediatorship is

⁹ *Ibidem*. “...praecepta et dona hominibus exhibendo...”

¹⁰ *Ibidem*. Latin text: “...pro hominibus ad Deum satisfaciendo et interpellando.”

¹¹ Emil Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine*, (Milwaukee, WI: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1954), 72-73. Words in brackets added.

¹² Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine*, 73.

¹³ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, Vol. 1, (London, England, UK: Catholic Way Publishing, 2014), 163.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*. Words in brackets added.

¹⁵ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “μεσότης.”

¹⁶ Cf. *Holy Bible*, RSV-CE, Ex 32:30; 33:12-16; Num 16:45-50; 21:7, etc.

expanded to one between God and *all* people of every time and place. Christ is the one mediator, says St. Paul, “who gave himself as a ransom for *all*” (1 Tim 2:6).¹⁷ As is pointed out in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, “The universal validity of his mediatorial self-offering to death gives all a share in salvation from God’s stand-point.”¹⁸ In this essay, I am claiming that Our Lady also exercises a kind of universal mediation, but one that is subordinated to that of Christ, as we shall see.

Heis vs. Monos

When St. Paul calls Christ the “one mediator between God and men” (εἷς καὶ μεσίτης θεοῦ καὶ ἀνθρώπων), what does this “one” (εἷς) signify? Does it mean Christ is the unique mediator to the *exclusion* of all others, or does it mean that He is the one principal mediator, who is the *source* of the mediation of others, i.e., in whom other “mediators” participate?

Mark Miravalle notes that “there is another Greek word that St. Paul could have used if he wanted to refer to Christ’s mediation as completely exclusive, namely ‘monos’, which means ‘sole’, ‘only’, or ‘exclusive one’.”¹⁹ Michael O’Carroll also observes, “The use of ‘one’ (*heis* not *monos*) emphasizes Christ’s transcendence as a mediator, through the unique value of his redemptive death.”²⁰ In other words, Christ is certainly *the Mediator*, beyond all others, and yet, this is *not* to the exclusion of others. Miravalle explains:

The proper understanding of “Christ the one Mediator” text of 1 Tim 2:5 presupposes a critical and fundamental distinction: the one and perfect mediation of Jesus Christ *does not prevent or prohibit*, but rather *provides and calls for* a sharing and participation by others in a subordinate and secondary fashion in this one perfect mediation of the Lord. The perfect mediation of Jesus Christ allows for, as a quality and manifestation of its perfection, the par-

¹⁷ Italics added. The Greek text: ὁ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων.

¹⁸ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “μεσίτης.”

¹⁹ Mark Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations—Towards a Papal Definition?* (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1995), footnote 91, 272.

²⁰ Michael O’Carroll, *Theotokos: A Theological Encyclopedia of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1982), 238.

tipication of others in his one and primordial mediation to the Father.²¹

A parallel idea can be seen in the Gospel of Matthew, where Christ commands his disciples, saying, “And you are not to be called rabbi, for you have *one* teacher And call no man your father on earth, for you have *one* Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have *one* master, the Christ” (Mt 23:8-10).²² In the Greek, the word used for “one” in each of the above statements is “εἷς” (*heis*). In using this word, it is obvious that Christ did not mean to exclude the possibility of anyone else being called “teacher,” “father,” and “master”—in fact, these terms continue to be used today. Rather, the footnote given in the RSV-CE states with regard to the word, *father*, “i.e., ‘Do not use the title without reference to God’s universal fatherhood.’ He cannot mean that the title is never to be used by a son to his father.”²³

Similarly, we can say that, although Christ is the *only* Son of God, all are called to share in that one divine Sonship. As St. Paul declares in his letter to the Galatians, “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Gal 4:4-6). Therefore, just as we can be called sons of God, without in any way diminishing Christ’s unique Sonship, but rather, by participating in it, so also, St. Paul does not mean that we are never to apply the term, “mediator” to anyone other than Christ, but rather that, in using it, one must always keep in mind the transcendent, primary, and universal mediation of Christ, in whom all other mediators participate. Consequently, as Aquinas points out, “Nothing hinders certain others from being called mediators, in some respect, between God and man, forasmuch as they cooperate in uniting men to God, dispositively or ministerially.”²⁴

III. The Doctrine of Participation

In order to properly understand Mary’s mediation, it is important to first understand the metaphysical meaning of the term, “participation.” In *De Hebdomadi-*

²¹ Mark Miravalle, “The *Whole Truth about Mary*, Ecumenism and the Year 2000,” in *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations II, Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical*, (Santa Barbara, CA: Queenship Publishing, 1996), 24.

²² Italics added.

²³ RSV-CE footnote, Mt 23:9.

²⁴ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 26, a. 1, resp. “Nihil tamen prohibet aliquos alios secundum quid dici mediatores inter Deum et hominem, prout scilicet cooperantur ad unionem hominum cum Deo dispositively vel ministerialiter.”

bus, St. Thomas Aquinas notes that “to participate” means “to grasp a part.”²⁵ He then explains three types of participation, saying, “When something receives in a particular way that which belongs to another in a universal way, it is said to ‘participate’ in that, as human being is said to participate in animal ...; a subject participates in accident, and matter in form ...; [and] an effect is said to participate in its own cause, and especially *when it is not equal* to the power of its cause ...”²⁶

The first two types of participation Aquinas mentions are known as logical participation (i.e., the species participates in the genus, and the individual in the species), and real participation (i.e., the subject participates in the accident, and matter in the form). The third mode of participation, in which the effect participates in its cause, is known as “causal participation,” and is what most concerns us here. This is the kind of participation which Aquinas will apply, on a natural level, to being and natural perfections (goodness, wisdom, etc.), and on a supernatural level in this life, to grace (when speaking of our participation in Christ, in the life of God, and in the sacraments.) In the next life, the blessed will also be allowed to participate in the *lumen gloriae*, by which they will enjoy the vision of God.

There is an important relationship between participation and causality. Aquinas points out, “Whatever is found in anything by participation, must be caused in it by that to which it belongs essentially.”²⁷ Therefore, with regard to our participation in being, which belongs essentially to God as *Ipsum Esse per se subsistens*, Aquinas explains, “all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation. Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation in being, ... are caused by one First Being, Who possesses being most perfectly.”²⁸ I will discuss causal participation further with regard to Christ (and Mary) in a later section.

²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *An Exposition of the “On the Hebdomads” of Boethius* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 19 (Chpt. 2, line 71). The Latin (1992 Leonine ed.) is “partem capere,” 18.

²⁶ *Ibidem*. “...quando aliquid particulariter recipit id quod ad alterum pertinet uniuersaliter, dicitur participare illud, sicut homo dicitur participare animale...; subiectum participat accedens, et materia formam...; effectus dicitur participare suam causam, et precipue quando non adequat uirtutem sue cause....” Italics added.

²⁷ Aquinas, *STh*, I, q.44, a.1, resp. “Si enim aliquid invenitur in aliquo per participationem, necesse est quod causetur in ipso ab eo cui essentialiter convenit...”

²⁸ *Ibidem*. “Relinquitur ergo quod omnia alia a Deo non sint suum esse, sed participant esse. Necesse est igitur omnia quae diversificantur secundum diversam participationem essendi,... causari ab uno primo ente, quod perfectissime est.”

The Importance of Analogy with Regard to Our Understanding of Participation

First, however, it is important to note that participation in God's being, goodness, truth, beauty, or other perfections, must be understood analogously in order to maintain our discernment of the transcendence of God, and *not* univocally. That is, the *res significata* (i.e. the thing signified, whether it be being or some other perfection) is more properly applied to God than creatures, although it is, in some way, applied to both. The *modus significandi* (i.e. the mode of signification), however, is different between God and creatures; that is, we can only understand these things as applied to creatures, although they are in God without the limitations and defects of creatures (*via negationis*) and "in a more eminent way than in creatures" (*via eminentiae*).²⁹ Consequently, analogy allows us to speak of the perfections of God "according to proportion,"³⁰ because "univocal predication [i.e. one and the same] is impossible between God and creatures."³¹

However, the afore-mentioned mode of participation is merely on the natural level, and applicable to all creatures in varying degrees, since any perfection found in creatures must first "pre-exist in God" (according to His mode of being) as their principle and cause.³² Nevertheless, the rational creature is called to a higher level of participation than other creatures, and one way rational creatures uniquely participate in God's perfection is by grace. Aquinas speaks of grace as "the expression or participation of the Divine goodness"³³ at a supernatural level, and elsewhere speaks of it as "a participation of the Divine Nature,"³⁴ citing 2 Peter 1:4 ("that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine Nature."³⁵) In other words, mankind is called to a special participation in God's own life by means of grace.

Aquinas also lists other ways in which human beings are called to participate in God's perfections. He declares, "For as man in his intellective powers participates in the Divine knowledge through the virtue of faith, and in his power of will participates in the Divine love through the virtue of charity, so also in the nature of the soul does he participate in the Divine Nature, *after the manner of a likeness*, through a certain regeneration or re-creation."³⁶ He uses the phrase, "after the manner of a

²⁹ Aquinas, *STh*, I, q. 13, a. 3, resp. "...secundum eminentiorum modum quam in creaturis."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, a. 5, resp. "...idest proportionem."

³¹ *Ibidem*. "...impossibile est aliquid praedicari de Deo et creaturis univoce."

³² *Ibidem*. "...in Deo praexistunt..."

³³ Aquinas, *STh*, I-II, q.110, a.2, ad 2. "...expressio vel participatio divinae bonitatis..."

³⁴ *Ibid.*, a. 3, resp. "...participatio divinae naturae..."

³⁵ *Ibidem*. "...ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 4, resp. Italics added. "Sicut enim per potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei; et secundum potentiam voluntatis amorem divinum,

likeness,” to once more indicate that these perfections in which we participate, can only be predicated of God and man analogically, not univocally. Similarly, it must be said that “mediatorship,” like “sonship,” can only be predicated analogically of Christ and men, with Christ’s mediatorship being the primary analogate in which we participate.

Participation in Christ’s Mediation

The causal type of participation, mentioned above, can be seen even when speaking of the soul of Christ, since Christ is one Divine Person with two distinct natures, and so, “the soul of Christ is not essentially Divine. Hence it behooves it to be Divine by participation, which is by grace.”³⁷ In addition, it is because of the participation in which Christ’s humanity shares in His divinity that His humanity is able to be “the instrument of the Godhead.”³⁸ Consequently, the participation of Christ’s humanity in His divinity results in His humanity becoming an instrumental cause, i.e. it allows His humanity to participate in the action of the His divinity, which is the principal agent. As St. Thomas also notes, “To give grace or the Holy Ghost belongs to Christ as He is God, authoritatively; but instrumentally it belongs also to Him as man, inasmuch as His manhood is the instrument of His Godhead. And hence by the power of the Godhead His actions were beneficial, i.e. by causing grace in us, both meritoriously and efficiently.”³⁹

In a similar way, the Christian’s ontological participation by grace in Christ allows him to act as Christ’s instrument, which is also true of the Blessed Virgin, as we shall discuss further in the section on Mary’s Causality. According to Cornelio Fabro, the hypostatic union, in which Christ’s human nature is united to the Divine Person of the Son (and made thereby a participant in the divine life), “has become the primary source of all participation in grace by believers inasmuch as the human nature of Christ is the close instrument of the divinity.”⁴⁰ Aquinas explains Fabro’s point here more fully,

per virtutem caritatis; ita etiam per naturam animae participat, secundum quam similitudinem, naturam divinam, per quam regenerationem sive recreationem.”

³⁷ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 7, a. 1, ad 1. “...anima Christi non est per suam essentiam divina. Unde oportet quod fiat divina per participationem, quae est secundum gratiam.”

³⁸ *Ibid.*, ad 3. “...instrumentum divinitatis...”

³⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 8, a. 1, ad 1. “...dare gratiam aut spiritum sanctum convenit Christo secundum quod Deus, auctoritative, sed instrumentaliter ei convenit secundum quod est homo, inquantum scilicet eius humanitas fuit instrumentum divinitatis eius. Et ita actiones ipsius ex virtute divinitatis fuerunt nobis salutiferae, utpote gratiam in nobis causantes, et per meritum et per efficientiam quamdam.”

⁴⁰ Cornelio Fabro, “The Intensive Hermeneutics of Thomistic Philosophy: The Notion of Participation,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, trans. by B. M. Bonansea, vol. 27, n. 3 (March 1974), 481.

The closer a substance stands to the goodness of God, the more fully it participates in His goodness Consequently the humanity of Christ also, because it is connected with the divinity more closely than the others and in a more special way, has participated in the divine goodness through the gift of grace in a more excellent way.⁴¹

For this reason, explains St. Thomas, it was fitting that Christ should also communicate this grace to us through his humanity. He continues,

And because in some sense Christ communicates the effects of grace to all rational creatures, this is why He is in some sense the source of all grace in His humanity, just as God is the source of all being. Then, as all the perfection of being is united in God, in Christ the fullness of all grace and virtue is found, and because of it He not only is capable of the work of grace Himself but can bring others to grace. For this reason He has the headship.⁴²

By “headship,” Aquinas is speaking here of Christ as the head of the Church in his humanity, and it is in this way that he is the principle and source of all grace for his members, who are incorporated into his Mystical Body. One of the actions pertaining to the head, explains St. Thomas, is that of having power over the body, “because the power and movement of the other members, together with the direction of them in their acts, is from the head.”⁴³ In this way, Christ “has the power of bestowing grace on all the members of the Church,”⁴⁴ and, I would argue, it is also in this way that the members of Christ’s Body can be said to be His instruments.

As we have noted, therefore, Christ, in his *humanity*, is able to be the “one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim 2:5). It is in this one mediation that we are *all* called to participate. The Second Vatican Council points out, “Just as the priest-

⁴¹ St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, in *Quaestiones Disputatae*, q. 29, a.5, resp, as found online, dhsprory.org. “Unaquaeque autem substantia tanto a Deo plenius bonitatem eius participat, quanto ad eius bonitatem appropinquat.... Unde et humanitas Christi, ex hoc ipso quod prae aliis vicinius et specialius divinitati erat coniuncta, excellentius bonitatem divinam participavit per gratiae donum.”

⁴² Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 29, a.5, resp. “Et quia Christus in omnes creaturas racionales quodammodo effectus gratiarum influit, inde est quod ipse est principium quodammodo omnis gratiae secundum humanitatem, sicut Deus est principium omnis esse: unde, sicut in Deo omnis essendi perfectio adunatur, ita in Christo omnis gratiae plenitudo et virtutis invenitur, per quam non solum ipse possit in gratiae opus, sed etiam alios in gratiam adducere. Et per hoc habet capitis rationem.”

⁴³ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 8, a. 1, resp. “...quia virtus et motus ceterorum membrorum, et gubernatio eorum in suis actibus, est a capite,....”

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*. “...virtutem habuit influendi gratiam in omnia membra Ecclesiae,....”

hood of Christ is shared [*participatur*] in various ways by the ministers and by the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is really communicated in different ways to His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing [*participatam*] in this one source.”⁴⁵ In other words, we are all called to participate in the mediation of Christ. How do we participate in it? One of the most important ways is by our intercession. The then Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger explains, “Christ as the only mediator does not take away our task to stand before God as persons linked to each other and responsible for each other. We all in different ways and in union with Jesus Christ, can be *mediators for each other* in our approach to God.”⁴⁶ Therefore, all human persons are called to participate in Christ’s mediation to some degree, but Our Lady participates in it in a special way.

IV. Mary Mediatrix in Sacred Tradition

Before continuing my explanation of the way in which Mary participates in Christ’s mediation, I would like to look at how she has often been given the title, “Mediatrix,” or some similar title, by Church Fathers and saints throughout the ages, as well as by numerous ecclesial documents. In the following two subsections, I will review just some of these.

In the Church Fathers and Other Saints

Although St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. ca. 202) in his work *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* did not specifically use the term “Mediatrix,” he did speak of the Virgin Mary as “having become another virgin’s [i.e., Eve’s] advocate (*advocata*).”⁴⁷ Since there is no Greek version of this text extant, it is hard to know how exactly to translate *advocata*. Armitage Robinson translates it as “intercessor.”⁴⁸ Luigi Gam-

⁴⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, Vatican translation, (Strathfield, NSW, Australia: St. Paul’s Publications, 2009), 62 (70). Latin text: “...sicut sacerdotium Christi variis modis tum a ministris tum a fideli populo participatur, et sicut una bonitas Dei in creaturis modis diversis realiter diffunditur, ita etiam unica mediatio Redemptoris non excludit, sed suscitatur variam apud creaturas participatam ex unico fonte cooperationem,” as found online, www.vatican.va.

⁴⁶ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, *The Sign of the Woman: An Introduction to the Encyclical, “Redemptoris Mater,”* in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988), 31.

⁴⁷ St. Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 33, as found in *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: the Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought*, by Luigi Gambero (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1999) 55. St. Irenaeus also uses the same title, *advocata*, for Mary in *Adversus Haereses*, 5.19, which is often translated as “patroness.”

⁴⁸ St. Irenaeus, *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* 33, as translated from the Armenian version by Armitage Robinson (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1920) as found at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.txt>. Note: The title given by Robinson (i.e., *The*

bero suggests that the original Greek word may have been “*parákletos* (defender, advocate, intercessor).”⁴⁹ In any event, Gambero points out that this is the first-time in ancient Christian literature that we find the title, *advocata*, applied to the Blessed Virgin. He also notes, “Present-day doctrine about Mary’s collaboration in the redemption of man and the mediation of divine grace has its distant but discernible roots in the teaching of the great bishop of Lyons.”⁵⁰

St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) gives a series of praises of Mary as the *Theotokos* (i.e., God-bearer) in his famous *Homily* 11, and in his long list of acclamations, he attributes the work of salvation to Mary, since, although it had God as its principal efficient cause, St. Cyril understands it to have been worked through Mary, as the Mother of God. Consequently, he exclaims, “Hail, Mary, *Theotokos*, through whom has gone forth ineffable grace, about which the Apostle would say, ‘The salvific grace of God has appeared to all men.’ Hail Mary, *Theotokos*, through whom has gone forth the true light, Our Lord Jesus Christ.”⁵¹ And again, further on, he says, “Hail, Mary, *Theotokos*, through whom John and the Jordan are sanctified, and the devil is dishonored. Hail, Mary, *Theotokos*, through whom every believing spirit is saved.”⁵² Thus, he makes it clear that as the Mother of God, it was through Mary that God accomplished the work of saving the human race.

St. Cyril also points out, when speaking of the wedding feast at Cana, in his *Commentary on John*, that “Having great moment [literally, “weight”] in [causing] the miracle to take place, the persuasive woman overcame, as was fitting, her son, the Lord.”⁵³ In other words, it is only through Mary’s mediation that Our Lord consented to perform his first public miracle, that of changing the water into wine.

Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching) is slightly different from the title the work is normally known by (i.e., *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*).

⁴⁹ Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, *op. cit.*, 56.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁵¹ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Homily* 11, PG 77, 1034A. Translation mine, giving preference to the Greek. The original Greek text reads, Χαίριος, Μαρία Θεοτόκε, δι’ ἧς προῆλθε τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ... Χαίριος, Μαρία Θεοτόκε, δι’ ἧς προῆλθεν ἡ χάρις ἡ ἀνεκλάλητος, περὶ ἧς ὁ Ἀπόστολος βοῶν ἔλεγεν, «Ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.» And the Latin: *Salve, Maria Deipara, per quam prodiit lux vera, Dominus noster, Jesus Christus ... Salve, Maria Deipara, per quam ineffabilis gratia prodiit, de qua Apostolus dicebat: “Apparuit gratia Dei salutaris omnibus hominibus.”*

⁵² *Ibidem*, PG 77, 1034C. Translation mine, giving preference to the Greek. The original Greek text reads, Χαίριος, Μαρία Θεοτόκε, δι’ ἧς ὁ Ἰωάννης καὶ Ἰορδάνης ἀγιάζονται, καὶ διάβολος ἀτιμάζεται. Χαίριος, Μαρία Θεοτόκε, δι’ ἧς πᾶσα πνοὴ πιστεύουσα σώζεται. And the Latin text, *Salve, Maria Deipara, per quam Joannes et Jordanis sanctificantur, et diabolus rejicitur. Salve, Maria Deipara, per quam salvatur omnis spiritus fidelis.*

⁵³ St. Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on John* 2, 1, PG 73, 225CD. Translation mine, giving preference to the Greek. The Greek text reads, Πολλὴν ἔχουσα τὴν ῥοπὴν εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι τὸ

St. Germanus of Constantinople (d. ca. 733) preaches Mary's mediation in liberating the city of Constantinople from the Arabs, saying, "May the Ever-Virgin—radiant with divine light and full of grace, mediatrix first through her supernatural birth and now because of the intercession of her maternal assistance—be crowned with never-ending blessings."⁵⁴ It is important to note here that the word translated "mediatrix" is "mesiteusasa" (μεσιτεύσασα), the feminine participle of "mesiteuw" (μεσιτεύω), which means "to mediate"⁵⁵ and is related to the word, "mesitēs" (μεσίτης), the very word, as we have noted above, used in 1 Timothy 2:5 to speak of Christ as the "one mediator."

Many other saints have also referred to the Blessed Virgin in a similar manner. The following are a few examples of those living in the second millennium. In a sermon for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) exhorts his listeners, "My dearest brethren, with every fiber, every feeling of our hearts, with all the affection of our minds, and with all the ardour of our souls, let us honour Mary, for such is the will of God, Who would have us obtain everything through the hands of Mary."⁵⁶ St. Bernard does not deny that Jesus is the mediator whom the Father has given us, but he says, "Assuredly the Son will listen to the Mother and the Father will listen to the Son. My little children, behold the sinner's ladder."⁵⁷ He continues, "My brethren, let us seek grace and let us seek it through Mary,"⁵⁸ and he compares her with an Aqueduct that "reached up to the Fountain of grace."⁵⁹

One of the saints who is particularly noted for the promulgation of devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in general, and especially as mediatrix of all graces, is St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716). In his masterpiece, *True Devotion to Mary*, de Montfort points out,

θαῦμα νενίκηκεν ἡ γυνὴ πείθουσα διὰ τὸ πρόπον ὡς υἱὸν τὸν Κύριον. And the Latin text, *Magnam habens auctoritatem ad miraculum eliciendum mulier Dominum filium suum, ut par erat, persuasit.*

⁵⁴ St. Germanus of Constantinople, *Homily for the Liberation of Constantinople* 23, ed. V. Grumel in *Revue des études Byzantines* 16 (1958): 198, n.26. The Greek text reads, Τοῦτοις γὰρ ἅπανιν ἡ θεαυγής καὶ κεχαριτωμένη ἀειπάρθενος Θεῷ μεσιτεύσασα ὑπερφυῖ κυνορριζὰ τὸ πρότερον, καὶ τανὺν μητρικῆς παρρησίας πρεσβεία, μακαρισμοῖς ἀσιγήτοις περιστρεφέσθω. English translation as found in Gambero's *Mary and the Fathers of the Church*, 387.

⁵⁵ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, transl. by W. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1979).

⁵⁶ St. Bernard of Clairvaux, "Sermon for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary," in *St. Bernard's Sermons on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, transl. by "a priest of Mount Mel-leray" (Chulmleigh, Devon, England: Augustine Publishing Company, 1984), 86.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 86, 87.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

God the Holy Ghost enriched His faithful spouse with gifts undreamed of. And He selected her to distribute all that is His, as she wills, when she wills, as much as she wills, to whom she wills. No heavenly gift comes to earth that does not pass through her virginal hands. This is the will of God; that whatever we receive, we receive through Mary.⁶⁰

It is clear here that in speaking of Our Lady's mediation of graces, St. Louis does not mean the mediation of Jesus Christ is in any way decreased or set aside. On the contrary, de Montfort explains that Mary "never asks, wills, or does anything contrary to the eternal, changeless will of God."⁶¹ Therefore, whatever she asks for is in perfect conformity with what He has already decreed.

De Montfort, in speaking of the Blessed Mother as mediatrix, specifically notes that her role is also that of being "our mediator with the Mediator."⁶² He affirms, "Through her the Mediator came to us, through her we must go to the Mediator."⁶³ He summarizes this understanding by saying, "In order to go to the Father, we must first go to the Son, our Mediator, our Redeemer. In order to go to the Son, we must first go to Mary, our mediatrix, our intercessor."⁶⁴

For the sake of better understanding what kind of mediation the saints attribute to Our Lady, it is also helpful to note St. Alphonsus Liguori's (1696-1787) explanation in *The Glories of Mary*. In this work, St. Alphonsus points out that there are two main kinds of mediation: the mediation of justice (which belongs only to Christ, and is by way of merit) and the mediation of grace (which is the kind of mediation attributed to Mary, and is by way of prayer.) He states,

We readily admit that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of justice By His merits He obtains for us all grace and salvation. But we also say that Mary is the Mediatrix of grace. She does indeed receive through Jesus Christ all she obtains, and prays for it in the name of Jesus Christ. Yet, whatever graces we receive, they come to us through her intercession.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *True Devotion to Mary* (Brooklyn, NY: Montfort Publications, 1956), 8.

⁶¹ De Montfort, *True Devotion*, 9.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁶⁵ St. Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glories of Mary* (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 1981), 98-99.

In addition, St. Alphonsus goes so far as to say that “Mary’s intercession is not only useful but necessary for salvation: not absolutely, but morally, necessary.”⁶⁶ In other words, it is a necessity based on God’s own will that we should seek Our Lady’s intercession in all our needs, since He has “decreed that all the graces He gives human beings should pass through Mary’s hands.”⁶⁷

Therefore, it is evident that from the early periods of Church history to modern day, Our Lady has been understood to be a type of advocate (St. Irenaeus), mediatrix (St. Germanus), or a vessel through whom God pours His graces onto mankind (St. Cyril, St. Bernard, St. Louis, St. Alphonsus) as can be seen in the writings of some of the greatest Church Fathers and other saints.

Ecclesial Documents Concerning the Mediation of Mary

Several popes and the Second Vatican Council have referred to Mary with either the title, “Mediatrix,” or have used similar language of her. In this section, I will briefly review much of what has been said of her mediation in ecclesial documents, although this list is not exhaustive.

Pope Blessed Pius IX (reigned 1846-1878), in his papal bull declaring the dogma of the Immaculate Conception (*Ineffabilis Deus*), commends Our Lady, saying,

All our hope do we repose in the most Blessed Virgin—in the all fair and immaculate one who has crushed the poisonous head of the most cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world: ... in her who is the safest refuge and the most trustworthy helper of all who are in danger; in her who, with her only-begotten Son, is *the most powerful Mediatrix and Conciliatrix in the whole world*; in her who is the most excellent glory, ornament, and impregnable stronghold of the holy Church; in her who has destroyed all heresies and snatched the faithful people and nations from all kinds of direst calamities; in her do we hope who has delivered us from so many threatening dangers.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁶⁷ St. Alphonsus, *The Glories of Mary*, 97.

⁶⁸ Pope Blessed Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus* (December 8, 1854). The Latin text reads “Certissima vero spe et omni prorsus fiducia nitimur fore, ut ipsa beatissima Virgo, quae tota pulchra et Immaculata venenosum crudelissimi serpentis caput contrivit, et salutem attulit mundo,... quaeque tutissimum cunctorum periclitantium perfugium, et fidissima auxiliatrix, ac *totius terrarum orbis potentissima apud unigenitum Filium suum mediatrix, et conciliatrix*, ac praeclarissimum Ecclesiae sanctae decus et ornamentum, firmissimumque praesidium, cunctas semper interemit haereses, et fideles populos, gentesque a maximis omnis generis calamitatibus eripuit, ac Nos ipsos a tot ingruentibus periculis liberavit....” Italics added. The Latin text is archived

Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914) quotes the italicized text above in his encyclical commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of *Ineffabilis Deus*. He states,

It cannot, of course, be denied that the dispensation of these treasures is the particular and peculiar right of Jesus Christ, for they are the exclusive fruit of His Death, who by His nature is the mediator between God and man. Nevertheless, by this companionship in sorrow and suffering already mentioned between Mother and the Son, it has been allowed to the august Virgin to be *the most powerful mediatrix and advocate of the whole world* with her Divine Son.⁶⁹

It would appear that, in citing the italicized phrase from *Ineffabilis Deus*, the Holy Father wishes to especially bring to the attention of the faithful the fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary is our Mediatrix with her Son, Our Lord. In fact, he also points this out in asking the rhetorical question, “For can anyone fail to see that there is no surer or more direct road than by Mary for uniting all mankind in Christ and obtaining through Him the perfect adoption of sons, that we may be holy and immaculate in the sight of God?”⁷⁰ And in another place, Pope St. Pius X affirms boldly, “the Virgin is more powerful than all others as a means for uniting mankind with Christ.”⁷¹ This, as we have noted, is precisely the role of a mediator—to act as a mean uniting two extremes.

Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903), in his Encyclical On the Rosary (*Octobri Mense*) points out clearly that just as the Blessed Virgin, “in the place of all human na-

online at <https://archive.org/stream/bullineffabilisi00cath#page/n3/mode/2up>, in *The Bull “Ineffabilis” in Four Languages; or, The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Defined*, transl. and ed. Rev. Ulick J. Bourke (Dublin, Ireland: John Mullany, 1868), 75-76.

⁶⁹ Pope St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* (February 2, 1904), 13, as found online at www.vatican.va. Latin text taken from *ASS (Acta Sanctae Sedis)* 36:454, ed. Victorii Piazzesi, (Romae: S. Congr. de Propaganda Fide, 1903-1904): “Equidem non diffitemur horum erogationem munerum private proprioque iure esse Christi; siquidem et illa eius unius morte nobis sunt parta, et Ipse pro potestate mediator Dei atque hominum est. Attamen, pro ea, quam diximus, dolorum atque aerumnarum Matris cum Filio communione, hoc Virgini augustae datum est, ut sit *totius terrarum orbis potentissima apud unigenitum Filium suum mediatrix et conciliatrix*.” Note that although the English translations of the two texts are slightly different, the Latin phrase (in italics) is exactly the same.

⁷⁰ St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum*, 5. Latin text from *ASS* 36:451: “Nam cui exploratum non sit nullum, praeterquam per Mariam, esse certius et expeditius iter ad universos cum Christo iungendos, perque illum perfectam filiorum adoptionem assequendam ut simus sancti et immaculati in conspectu Dei?”

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 8. Latin text from *ASS* 36:452: “...nullus etiam hac Virgine efficacior ad homines cum Christo iungendos.”

ture,”⁷² freely consented to becoming the Mother of God, so also, “it may be affirmed with no less truth and justice that absolutely nothing from this immense treasury of all the graces brought forth by the Lord ... is imparted to us, by the will of God, except through Mary. Thus, just as no one can go to the supreme Father except through the Son, so, as a rule, no one can go to Christ except through the Mother.”⁷³

The Second Vatican Council strongly reaffirmed this doctrine of Mary’s mediation in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. After taking pains to make it clear that Christ is the “one Mediator” and quoting 1 Timothy 2:5-6, the Council then explains,

The maternal duty of Mary toward men in no wise obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows His power. For all the salvific influence of the Blessed Virgin on men originates, not from some inner necessity, but from the divine pleasure. It flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. In no way does it impede, but rather does it foster the immediate union of the faithful with Christ.⁷⁴

The document then explains that because Mary gave her consent to become the Mother of God by the ordaining of divine providence and was united in a special manner with Christ as He suffered on the Cross, she was able to cooperate with Him in giving life to souls. Therefore, say the Council Fathers, “she is our mother in the order of grace,”⁷⁵ and this special maternity of Mary will last “until

⁷² Pope Leo XIII, *Octobri Mense* (September 22, 1891) 4, as found in Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum; Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd ed., (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2012), 379 (§3274). The Latin text is a quotation of the *STb* of St. Thomas Aquinas, III, q. 30, a. 1, “Per annuntiationem expectabatur consensus Virginis, loco totius humanae naturae.”

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 4. “Ex quo non minus vere proprieque affirmare licet, nihil prorsus de permagno illo omnis gratiae thesauro, quem attulit Dominus, ... nihil nobis, nisi per Mariam, Deo sic volente, impertiri: ut, quo modo ad summum Patrem, nisi per Filium, nemo potest accedere, ita fere, nisi per Matrem, accedere nemo possit ad Christum.”

⁷⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, 60. “Mariae autem maternum munus erga homines hanc Christi unicam mediationem nullo modo obscurat nec minuit, sed virtutem eius ostendit. Omnis enim salutaris Beatae Virginis influxus in homines non ex aliqua rei necessitate, sed ex beneplacito divino exoritur et ex superabundantia meritorum Christi profluit. Eius mediationi innititur, ab illa omnino dependet, ex eademque totam virtutem haurit; unionem autem immediatam credentium cum Christo nullo modo impedit sed fovet.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 61. “Quam ob causam mater nobis in ordine gratiae exstitit.”

the eternal fulfillment of all the elect.”⁷⁶ The Council Fathers also note that Mary, “by her constant intercession *continues* to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation.”⁷⁷ Therefore, they declare, “the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of *Advocate*, *Auxiliatrix*, *Adjutrix*, and *Mediatrix*. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the One Mediator.”⁷⁸

Pope St. John Paul II reaffirms this teaching by quoting part of this text from the Second Vatican Council in his encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*. He states, “Mary’s motherhood continues unceasingly in the Church as the mediation which intercedes, and the Church expresses her faith in this truth by invoking Mary ‘under the titles of *Advocate*, *Auxiliatrix*, *Adjutrix* and *Mediatrix*.”⁷⁹

As can be seen, therefore, over the last several hundred years, the ordinary Magisterium has consistently emphasized Our Lady’s role of Mediatrix, teaching the faithful to invoke her under this title.

V. Principles of Mary’s Mediation

Pope St. John Paul II, in repeating the above teaching of Vatican II regarding Mary’s mediation, declares, “Since by virtue of divine election Mary is the earthly Mother of the Father’s consubstantial Son and his ‘generous companion’ in the work of redemption, ‘she is a mother to us in the order of grace.’”⁸⁰ In this succinct statement, we see the three principles from which flow the Church’s understanding of the Blessed Virgin’s unique role as Mediatrix. They are 1) her divine maternity, 2) her role as coredemptrix and the New Eve, and 3) her spiritual motherhood of all mankind. We will discuss each of these in the following three subsections.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 62. “...usque ad perpetuam omnium electorum consummationem.”

⁷⁷ *Lumen Gentium*, 62. “...sed multiplici intercessione sua *pergit* in aeternae salutis donis nobis conciliandis.” Italics added. Note: the Vatican English translation reads, “continued,” but the Latin verb, “pergit,” is in the *present* tense.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 62. “B. Virgo in Ecclesia titulis *Advocatae*, *Auxiliatricis*, *Adjutricis*, *Mediatricis* invocatur. Quod tamen ita intelligitur, ut dignitati et efficacitati Christi unius Mediatoris nihil deroget, nihil superaddat.” Italics added.

⁷⁹ Pope St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1988) 40, (131). “...maternitas Mariae in Ecclesia indesinenter perdurat ut mediatio intercedens, atque Ecclesia fidem in hanc veritatem enuntiat invocans Mariam nominibus *Advocatae*, *Adjutricis*, *Auxiliatricis*, *Mediatricis*.” Italics added.

⁸⁰ St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 38 (125). Latin text: “Maria, cum sit ex: divina electione Mater terrestris Filii consubstantialis Patri, ac «generosa socia» in opere Redemptionis, «mater nobis in ordine gratiae existit.»”

1) “Mother of God”: The Divine Maternity

Since Our Lady is a human person like we are, she also participates in Christ’s mediation in a way similar to us, and yet, says Ratzinger, her participation “surpasses the mediating role that all of us, as members of the communion of saints, are allowed to exercise.”⁸¹ What makes Mary’s mediation special is the fact that it is *maternal*: “Mary’s mediation is unique because it is maternal mediation, related to Christ who is always born anew into this world.”⁸²

Pope St. John Paul II also emphasizes this in *Redemptoris Mater*, declaring, “Mary’s motherhood, completely pervaded by her spousal attitude as the ‘handmaid of the Lord’, constitutes the first and fundamental dimension of that mediation which the Church confesses and proclaims in her regard.”⁸³ In the same encyclical, St. John Paul II explains that “the first moment of submission to the one mediation ‘between God and men’—the mediation of Jesus Christ—is the Virgin of Nazareth’s acceptance of motherhood.”⁸⁴ Again, he declares, “Mary’s mediation is *intimately linked with her motherhood*,”⁸⁵ and it is this “specifically maternal character”⁸⁶ which distinguishes it from the mediation of other creatures, who all “in various and always subordinate ways share in the one mediation of Christ, although her own mediation is also a shared mediation.”⁸⁷

The Holy Father cites the Wedding Feast of Cana (Jn 2:1-11), as “*a sort of first announcement of Mary’s mediation*, wholly oriented toward Christ and tending to the revelation of his salvific power.”⁸⁸ St. John Paul II explains that Our Lady is present at Cana as the *Mother of Jesus* (Jn 2:1) and that, in the way St. John presents the story, it appears that Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding *because of Mary*. In her solicitude for others, Mary intercedes for the newlyweds, asking her Son to perform the miracle of providing wine, which had run short. Although at

⁸¹ Ratzinger, *The Sign of the Woman*, in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 32.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸³ St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 39 (126), referring to Mary’s response to the Angel Gabriel in Luke 1:38. Latin text: “Maternitas Mariae, quae penitus animo sponsali « ancillae Domini » imbuebatur, est prima et fundamentalis ratio illius mediationis, quam, eius respectu, Ecclesia profitetur atque pronuntiat...”

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 39 (125-126). Latin text: “Primum, quod in obtemperacione huic mediationi unice « inter Deum et homines » —quae est mediatio Christi — occurrit, est acceptio maternitatis, a Nazarethana Virgine facta.”

⁸⁵ St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 38 (124). “Mediatio enim Mariae intime conectitur cum eius maternitate...”

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*. “...indolem prae se ferens proprie maternam...”

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*. “...quae varia ratione quidem, sed semper « subordinata », Christi unicam mediationem participant; illius ergo etiam mediatio est participata.”

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 22 (89). “...paene praebet nobis praenuntiationem Mariae intercessionis, quae vertitur tota in Christum tenditque ad illius aperiendam salutiferam virtutem.” Italics original.

first Jesus appears to refuse her request, her faith in commanding the servants to do whatever He tells them prompted the miracle of changing the water into wine.

As the Supreme Pontiff points out, though the need for wine may appear to be of little real importance in the whole scheme of things, the symbolism of this story is of great value:

This coming to the aid of human needs means, at the same time, bringing those needs within the radius of Christ's messianic mission and salvific power. Thus there is a mediation: Mary places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs, and sufferings. *She puts herself "in the middle,"* that is to say *she acts as a mediatrix not as an outsider, but in her position as mother* Her mediation is thus in the nature of intercession: Mary "intercedes" for mankind. And that is not all. As a mother she also *wishes the messianic power of her Son to be manifested.*⁸⁹

Finally, the Holy Father notes that in the words of Mary to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5), we find an "essential element of Mary's maternal task."⁹⁰ That is, "*the Mother of Christ presents herself as the spokeswoman of her Son's will,* pointing out those things which must be done so that the salvific power of the Messiah may be manifested."⁹¹ Here we see the "descending mediation" of Mary, as well as the "ascending mediation" of her intercessory prayer. It is through "the intercession of Mary and the obedience of the servants [that] Jesus begins 'his hour'."⁹² Consequently, as Miravalle points out, "this first public manifestation of the glory of the Mediator in his adult mission of salvation was *in turn mediated by his Mother.*"⁹³

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 21 (87-88). "...occurrere hominis necessitatibus simul idem est atque inducere eum ipsum in muneris messianici circuitum ac salutiferae Christi virtutis. Habetur igitur hic mediatio: mediam sese collocat Maria inter Filium suum atque homines in vera ipsorum conditione privationum et inopiarum et dolorum. « Media » consistit, id est mediatricem agit haud sane ut aliena, sed in suo matris statu;... Indolem ergo intercessionis exhibet eius mediatio: Maria pro hominibus « intercedit. » Neque id dumtaxat: ut Mater item messianicam virtutem palam fieri cupit,..." Italics in original.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem.* "...pernecessaria materni muneris Mariae..."

⁹¹ *Ibidem.* "Christi Mater coram hominibus se praebebat uti *voluntatis Filii interpretem*, indicem earum necessitatum, quae sunt procurandae ut salvifica Messiae virtus comprobetur." Italics original.

⁹² *Ibidem.* "Deprecante ideo Maria in Cana obtemperantibusque administris, Iesus initium facit « suae horae. »"

⁹³ Miravalle, "Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation," in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 277.

St. Louis de Montfort demonstrates a kind of parallel between Our Lady's relationship to the Most Holy Trinity (particularly at the moment of the Incarnation) on the one hand, and her relationship of mediation to us, on the other. He explains,

To give ourselves to Jesus through Mary is to imitate God the Father, Who has given us His Son only through Mary, and Who communicates His grace to us only through Mary. It is to imitate God the Son, Who has come to us only through Mary, and Who, "by giving us an example, that as He has done, so we do also" (John xiii, 15), has urged us to go to Him by the same means by which He has come to us—that is, through Mary. It is to imitate the Holy Ghost, Who bestows His graces and gifts upon us only through Mary. "Is it not fitting," asks St. Bernard, "that grace should return to its author by the same channel which conveyed it to us?"⁹⁴

In other words, as I shall discuss further, just as Mary is the one through whom God the Father chose to send His Son, and the one through whom the Son came into the world, so she continues to be the one through whom the Holy Spirit pours forth His grace upon us, and through whom we also should go to God. In other words, she is our Mediatrix, one who unites the two extremes.

We have already seen above how St. Cyril of Alexandria, who was the great promoter of the Marian title, *Theotokos* (God-bearer), against Nestorius at the Council of Ephesus (431), united this title of *Theotokos* with Mary's mediation in the salvation of souls. Charles Journet notes,

The concept of *Theotokos*, the Mother of God, which Christians venerate, on which, from the very beginning the infallible intuition of the Church has focused and from which are deduced—not by weak argument of convenience but by an authentic unfolding—all the privileges of the Blessed Virgin and the fullness of Christ-conforming grace in her, is the existential, detailed evangelical concept of "the worthy Mother of a Savior God."⁹⁵

Garrigou-Lagrange also observes that "Mary ... became therefore Mother of the Redeemer in His role of Redeemer at the Annunciation."⁹⁶ Already at that mo-

⁹⁴ St. Louis Marie de Montfort, *The Secret of Mary* (Bayshore, NY: Montfort Publications, 1996), 29.

⁹⁵ Charles Cardinal Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, transl. by Victor Szczurek (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2004), 91.

⁹⁶ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life* (Rockford, IL: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1993), 158.

ment, “the Fathers could say that our salvation depended on Mary’s consent.”⁹⁷ Therefore, Mary’s position of mother and Mediatrix of men flows, as its primary principle, from her great privilege of being the Mother of God.

2) “Coredemptrix”: Mary’s Mediation as Stemming from her Role in Our Redemption

The second principle from which flows the Church’s understanding of the Blessed Virgin as Mediatrix is her role as Coredemptrix and the New Eve. Here we see, in a particular way, the principle of her ascending mediation between God and mankind, brought about by her participation in the Passion of her Son. In addition to her being Mother of God, it is in virtue of Our Lady’s participation in our Redemption (ascending mediation) that she is able to distribute all graces to us (descending mediation).

St. Thomas Aquinas explains how Christ’s Passion satisfies for sin by stating, “He properly atones for an offense who offers something which the offended one loves equally, or even more than he detested the offense.”⁹⁸ That is to say, Christ’s willingness to suffer more than compensated to the Father for our offenses. The reasons for this are, “First of all, because of the exceeding charity from which He suffered; secondly, on account of the dignity of His life which He laid down in atonement, for it was the life of one who was God and man; thirdly, on account of the extent of the Passion, and the greatness of the grief endured.”⁹⁹ I would like to propose that Mary’s union in the Passion of her Son was a real participation in the satisfaction which He made for sin: first, by her own great charity; second, by her own dignity as the Mother of God; and third, by the greatness of her sorrow.

Garrigou-Lagrange describes Mary’s participation in her Son’s suffering for souls:

Mary endured the *very suffering of the Savior*; she suffered for sin in the degree of her love for God, whom sin offends; for her Son, whom sin crucified; for souls, whom sin ravishes and kills She thus cooperated in the sacrifice of the cross by way of satisfaction or reparation, by offering to God for us, with great sorrow and most ardent love, the life of her most dear Son.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁸ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 48, a. 2, resp. “...ille proprie satisfacit pro offensa qui exhibet offenso id quod aeque vel magis diligit quam oderit offensam.”

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*. “Primo quidem, propter magnitudinem caritatis ex qua patiebatur. Secundo, propter dignitatem vitae suae, quam pro satisfactione ponebat, quae erat vita Dei et hominis. Tertio, propter generalitatem passionis et magnitudinem doloris assumpti....”

¹⁰⁰ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, 165. Italics added.

In other words, by Mary's extreme love (greater than any other, besides that of her Son) she was perfectly united to Him in making satisfaction for sin. We can see the Blessed Virgin's "ascending mediation" also highlighted by Pope Bl. Paul VI in *Marialis Cultus*, where he states,

This union of the Mother and the Son in the work of redemption reaches its climax on Calvary, where Christ "offered himself as the perfect sacrifice to God" (Heb 9:14) and where Mary stood by the cross (cf. Jn 19:25), suffering grievously with her only-begotten Son. There she united herself with a maternal heart to His sacrifice, and lovingly consented to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth' and also was offering to the eternal Father.¹⁰¹

In the preceding quote, Pope Bl. Paul VI is citing from *Lumen Gentium*, which also declares, regarding the role of the Blessed Virgin in our salvation,

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.¹⁰²

That is, because Mary had been immaculately conceived (having been redeemed by her Son at the very moment of her conception), she had no sin and was able to offer herself together with her Son as a "perfect victim." Consequently, Miravalle points out,

¹⁰¹ Pope Bl. Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, "For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" (February 2, 1974; Boston, MA: Pauline Books and Media, 1974), 20. The Pope is citing from *Lumen Gentium*, 58. Latin text: "Haec autem Matris et Filii coniunctio in opere Redemptionis (Cf CONC. VAT. II, Const. dogm. de Ecclesia Lumen Gentium, 57: AAS 57 (1965), 61) summe enituit in Calvariae monte, in quo Christus semetipsum obtulit immaculatum Deo (Heb 9, 14), atque Maria, prope Crucem stans (cf Io 19, 25), vehementer cum Unigenito suo condoluit et sacrificio Eius se materno animo sociavit, victimae de se genitae immolationi amanter consentiens (Ibid., 58: AAS 57 (1965), 61), quam et ipsa aeterno Patri obtulit (cf. Pius XII, Litterae Encyclicae Mystici Corporis: AAS 35 (1943), 247)."

¹⁰² *Lumen Gentium*, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, 56. Latin text: "...ac salvificam voluntatem Dei, pleno corde et nullo retardata peccato, complectens, semetipsam ut Domini ancillam personae et operi Filii sui totaliter devovit, sub Ipso et cum Ipso, omnipotentis Dei gratia, mysterio redemptionis inserviens. Merito igitur SS. Patres Mariam non mere passive a Deo adhibitam, sed libera fide et oboedientia humanae saluti cooperantem censent." Italics added.

She who was once known only as *Mary* is now publicly established by the dying Saviour as the *Woman*, the *Mother*, and the *Mediatrice* of the graces of redemption. The Mediator granted his Mother the gift of Mediatrice of graces as the fruit of his dying sacrifice for humanity and of her coredemptive participation. Again, she is the Mediatrice of graces because she was first the Coredemptrix.¹⁰³

Miravalle also notes that this relation of Coredemptrix and Mediatrice “is consistently taught by the Magisterium.”¹⁰⁴ By uniting her own sufferings to those of Christ, Mary, standing at the foot of the cross, shared in our redemption, although, of course, in a way subordinate to Christ, our Redeemer. Nevertheless, as Pope St. John Paul II teaches in *Salvifici Doloris*, Mary’s sufferings were “also a contribution to the redemption of all.”¹⁰⁵ This is made abundantly clear by Pope Saint Pius X, in his encyclical, *Ad Diem Illum*, where he declares,

When the supreme hour of the Son came, beside the Cross of Jesus there stood Mary His Mother, not merely occupied in contemplating the cruel spectacle, but rejoicing that her Only Son was offered for the salvation of mankind, and so entirely participating in His Passion, that if it had been possible she would have gladly borne all the torments that her Son bore (S. Bonav. 1. Sent d. 48, ad Litt. dub. 4). And from this *community of will and suffering* between Christ and Mary she merited to become most worthily the Reparatrix of the lost world (Eadmeri Mon. De Excellentia Virg. Mariae, c. 9) and *Dispensatrix of all the gifts that Our Savior purchased for us by His Death and by His Blood*.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrice, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrice, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 281. Italics original.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Footnote 129.

¹⁰⁵ Pope St. John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris* (February 11, 1984) 25, as found online at www.vatican.va. Latin text: “...verum etiam ad redemptionem omnium conferrent.”

¹⁰⁶ Pope St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* (February 2, 1904), 12, as found online at www.vatican.va. Italics added. Latin text from *ASS* 36:453-454: “Quum vero extremum Filii tempus advenit, stabat iuxta crucem Iesu Mater eius, non in immani tantum occupata spectaculo, sed plane gaudens quod Unigenitus suus pro salute generis humani offerretur, et tantum etiam compassa est, ut, si fieri potuisset, omnia tormenta quae Filium pertulit, ipsa multo libentius sustineret. — Ex hac autem Mariam inter et Christum communione dolorum ac voluntatis, prome ruit illa ut reparatrice perditis orbis dignissime fieret, atque ideo universorum munerum dispensatrix quae nobis Iesus nece et sanguine comparavit.”

William Most points to this statement as one piece of evidence that Mary cooperated with her Son, not only in the “subjective redemption” (i.e., “the *distribution* of that forgiveness and grace”¹⁰⁷—descending mediation), but also in the “objective redemption” (i.e., “Christ’s atonement and once-for-all *acquisition* of the entire treasury of grace for us”¹⁰⁸—ascending mediation), “*at least remotely* ... by being the Mother of the Redeemer.”¹⁰⁹

Of course, Mary’s share in our redemption was *de congruo* (i.e., by reason of fittingness) rather than *de condigno* (by reason of justice), as we shall see. With respect to her real sharing in our redemption, however, Most also points to a text of Pope Benedict XV, in his encyclical, *Inter Sodalicia*, which states:

With her suffering and dying Son, Mary endured suffering and almost death. She gave up her Mother’s rights over her Son to procure the salvation of mankind, and to appease the divine justice, she, as much as she could, immolated her Son, so that one can truly affirm that *together with Christ she has redeemed the human race*.¹¹⁰

It is in this sense that the Blessed Virgin is given the title of Coredemptrix, and it is this unique participation in our redemption (as well as her Divine Maternity) that also gives rise to her role of mediation of all graces. Journet uses the following metaphor to explain how Our Lady, the Church, and all Christians relate to Christ and to one another by means of a co-redemptive mediation which is participatory:

Just as the sun carries the earth, which carries the moon, though all the weight of the earth and the moon weigh ultimately on the sun, so the redemptive mediation of Christ bears the universal co-redemption of the Virgin, who in turn bears the collective co-redemptive mediation of the Church and the particular co-redemptive mediation of Christians; for, there are some souls that carry others, as a planet its moons.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ William G. Most, *Mary in Our Life: Our Lady in Doctrine and Devotion* (Kansas City, MO: Angelus Press, reprint 2014, 1st ed. 1937), 19.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁰ Pope Benedict XV, *Inter Sodalicia*, (March 22, 1918), *AAS (Acta Apostolicae Sedis)* 10:182 (Romae: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis), as found in Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 21. Italics added. Latin text reads: “Scilicet ita cum Filio patiente et moriente passa est et paene commortua, sic materna in Filium iura pro hominum salute abdicavit placandaeque Dei iustitiae, quantum ad se pertinebat, Filium immolavit, ut dici merito queat, Ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse.”

¹¹¹ Journet, *The Theology of the Church*, 94.

This metaphor shows how, in the one family of God, all members of the family have their unique role, while at the same time, they sustain and aid the weaker members. In this, it is clear that all the members are called to participate, to a greater or lesser degree, in the one mediation of Christ.

Finally, the fact that Christ addresses his mother as “Woman” both at the wedding feast of Cana and at the foot of the Cross indicates that Mary is the New Eve, replacing the first “Woman” of the book of Genesis (Gen 2:23). This is significant because, just as the first Eve cooperated with Adam in the fall into Original Sin, so also, Mary, the New Eve, cooperated with her Son, the New Adam, in our redemption. “Then,” explains Most, “the Redemption would really be parallel to the fall: in both we would have a head of the race, whose work alone was sufficient and necessary, joined by an inferior sharer, whose work alone would be definitely insufficient.”¹¹²

3) “Mother of the Church”: Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood

In 1964, at the close of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope Blessed Paul VI gave Mary the title of “Mother of the Church” (a title first used by St. Ambrose of Milan in the fourth century), saying, “Since Mary is the Mother of Christ, who, having at once assumed human nature in her virginal womb, joined to himself as Head His Mystical Body, which is the Church, therefore, Mary, insofar as [she is] Mother of Christ, must also be considered Mother of all the faithful and Pastors, namely, the Church.”¹¹³

Pope St. John Paul II explains in *Redemptoris Mater* that Mary’s being elected by God the Father to the supreme dignity of bearing His own Son “refers, on the ontological level, to the very reality of the union of the two natures in the person of the Word (*hypostatic union*).”¹¹⁴ There is, therefore, in her, “from the very beginning

¹¹² Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 20.

¹¹³ Pope Bl. Paul VI, *Conclusiones della III Sessione del Concilio Vaticano II: Allocuzione del Santo Padre, Paolo VI*, (November 21, 1964), 30, as found online at www.vatican.va. Translation mine. Latin text: “...quandoquidem Maria Mater Christi est, qui statim ac in ipsius virginali utero humanam naturam assumpsit, sibi ut Capiti adiunxit Corpus suum Mysticum, quod est Ecclesia. Maria igitur, utpote Mater Christi, Mater etiam fidelium ac Pastorum omnium, scilicet Ecclesiae, habenda est.” The Italian text is a little more straightforward: “...a gloria della Beata Vergine e a nostra consolazione dichiariamo Maria Santissima Madre della Chiesa, cioè di tutto il popolo cristiano, sia dei fedeli che dei Pastori...,” i.e., “...to the glory of the Blessed Virgin and for our consolation, we declare Most Holy Mary, Mother of the Church, that is, of all the Christian people, both of the faithful as well as of Pastors...” Translation from the Italian also mine.

¹¹⁴ Pope St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 39 (127). Italics original to the text. Latin text: “in ordine ontologico refertur ad ipsam veritatem unionis utriusque naturae in persona Verbi (quae est unio hypostatica).”

a complete openness to the person of Christ, to his whole work, to his whole mission.”¹¹⁵ In collaborating with Christ in his mission, explains the late Holy Father, Mary’s motherhood was transformed with a “ ‘burning charity’ toward all those to whom Christ’s mission was directed”¹¹⁶ seeking to give life to souls in union with her Son. In this manner, “Mary *entered, in a way all her own, into the one mediation* ‘between God and men’ *which is the mediation of the man Christ Jesus.*”¹¹⁷

The late Roman Pontiff also points out that it is Our Lord’s words from the Cross, “Woman, behold your son,” and then to the disciple, “Son, behold your Mother” (Jn 19:26-27), which “determine *Mary’s place in the life of Christ’s disciples*, and they express ... the new motherhood of Mother of the Redeemer: a spiritual motherhood, born from the heart of the Paschal Mystery of the Redeemer of the world.”¹¹⁸

Pope Pius XII further explains how Mary’s spiritual motherhood is intimately linked to her role as the New Eve:

It was she, the second Eve, who, *free from all sin, original or personal*, and always more intimately united with her Son, offered Him on Golgotha to the Eternal Father for all the children of Adam, stained by his unhappy fall, and her mother’s rights and her mother’s love were included in the holocaust. Thus she who, according to the flesh, was the mother of our Head, through the added title of pain and glory became, according to the Spirit, *the mother of all His members.*¹¹⁹

It was through her Immaculate Conception that Our Lady was *free from all sin, original or personal*, and thus, declares St. John Paul II,

¹¹⁵ St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 39. “...ab initio est animus plane patens personae Christi, toti eius operi, toti eius missioni.”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, (in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 127-128). “...« flagranti caritate » in omnes est repleta, ad quos Christi missio spectabat.”

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, (in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 128). “*Maria ingressa est modo prorsus personali in unicam mediationem « inter Deum et homines », quae est mediatio hominis Christi Iesu.*” Italics original.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 44, (in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 140). Latin text: “Quibus verbis locus statuitur, quem Maria in vita Christi discipulorum obtinet.... significatur nova eius maternitas ut Matris Redemptoris: maternitas spiritualis, exorta e profundo mysterii paschalis Redemptoris mundi.”

¹¹⁹ Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, (June 29, 1943) 110, as found online at www.vatican.va. Latin text from *AAS (Acta Apostolicae Sedis)* 35:247-248: “Ipsa fuit, quae vel propriae, vel hereditariae labis expert, arctissime semper cum Filio suo coniuncta, eundem in Golgotha, una cum maternorum iurium maternique amoris sui holocausto, nova veluti Eva, pro omnibus Adae filiis, miserando eius lapsu foedatis, Aeterno Patri obtulit; ita quidem, ut quae corpore erat nostri Capitis mater, spiritu facta esset, ob novum etiam doloris gloriaeque titulum, eius membrorum omnium mater.” Italics added.

[since] she was the first to experience within herself the supernatural consequences of this one mediation [of Christ]—in the Annunciation she had been greeted as ‘full of grace’—then we must say that through this fullness of grace and supernatural life, she was especially predisposed to cooperation with Christ, the one Mediator of human salvation. *And such cooperation is precisely this mediation subordinated to the mediation of Christ.*¹²⁰

Yet, the question may arise, how could Mary, being a finite creature, possibly know all our needs? Fr. Most notes that our needs, although many, are not infinite. He also points out that Mary, participating in the Beatific Vision, sees God Himself, and all things that concern her in Him. St. Thomas Aquinas explains in the third part of the *Summa Theologica*, “no beatified intellect fails to know in the Word whatever pertains to itself.”¹²¹ “But she has been constituted Mother of all men,” continues Most, “—hence, obviously, the needs of all do pertain to her, and therefore she sees the needs of all of us.”¹²²

VI. The Differences between the Mediation of Mary and That of Christ

It would behoove us here to identify the different classes of mediation and compare Our Lady’s mediation with the mediation of Christ. According to Antonio Royo Marin, there is a three-fold division of mediation which one must take into account: first, with regard to the mediator; second, with regard to the mediation itself; and finally, with regard to the effects of the mediation.¹²³

With regard to the mediator, Royo Marin observes that there are two types of mediation: the first is an *ontological* mediation, or a mediation which pertains to the mediator by his very *being*, and the second is a *dynamic* mediation, or that which belongs to the mediator by his *office*. The former, explains Royo Marin, “is that which

¹²⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, in *Mary: God’s Yes to Man*, 39 (128). Latin text: “Quoniam ipsa prima in se est experta effectus supernaturales unice huius mediationis — iam in annuntiatione ut « plena gratia » est salutata — affirmandum est eam ob talem plenitudinem gratiae viteque supernaturalis peculiari ratione para tam fuisse ad cooperandum Christo, unico Mediatori humane salutis. Quae cooperatio est ipsa mediatio subordinata mediationi Christi.” Words in brackets added.

¹²¹ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 10, a. 2, resp. Latin text: “...nulli tamen intellectui beato deest quin cognoscat in verbo omnia quae ad ipsum spectant.”

¹²² Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 39.

¹²³ Antonio Royo Marin, *La Virgen Maria: Teología y espiritualidad marianas*, (Madrid, Spain: Biblioteca de autores cristianos, 1968), 182-183. All of the page numbers in this section should be understood as referring to this work. All the translations from the Spanish text that follow are my own.

corresponds to that being who, *by his own nature*, is located between the two extremes which he is going to reconcile, and who, for the same reason, is most apt to carry out the mediation.”¹²⁴ The dynamic mediation, on the other hand, consists in the actual carrying out of this mediation as an office. Both kinds of mediation, of course, correspond to Christ: the ontological mediation, “because in virtue of his human nature, he is situated between God and men, since by his human nature he is inferior to the Father (Jn 14:28), and by his plenitude of grace, he is immensely superior to men”;¹²⁵ and the dynamic mediation, “because, by his death on the cross, he redeemed us from the slavery of the devil, realizing in fact the mediation between God and men.”¹²⁶

Royo Marin explains that both types of mediation also pertain to the Blessed Virgin Mary, although “in a proportional degree, and with an entire dependence on Christ”¹²⁷: First, the ontological, “since, by her divine maternity, she is located ontologically between God and men: inferior to God, but much superior to men”¹²⁸; and second, the dynamic, “since she carried out in fact, associated with Christ the Redeemer, the coredemption of the world.”¹²⁹

The second class of the triple division given by Royo Marin is with respect to the mediation itself. Here he explains that the mediation could be principal or secondary. The principal mediation “is that which the mediator realizes by his own excellence and his own merits, without relation or recourse to any other person.”¹³⁰ The secondary mediation, on the other hand, “is that which a mediator realizes, who also puts in something on his part, but in a narrow and essential dependency on another, more important mediator, who is the principal mediator.”¹³¹ It is clear here that Christ is the principal mediator, since he “carried out the redemption *by*

¹²⁴ 182. “...es la que corresponde a aquel ser que *por su propia naturaleza* está colocado entre los dos extremos a los cuales va a reconciliar, y que, por lo mismo, es aptísimo para realizar la mediación....”

¹²⁵ 184-185. “...porque en virtud de su naturaleza humana está situado entre Dios y los hombres, ya que por su naturaleza humana es inferior al Padre (Jn 14, 28) y por la plenitud de su gracia es inmensamente superior a los hombres.”

¹²⁶ 185. “...porque, por su muerte en la cruz, nos redimió de la esclavitud del demonio, realizando de hecho la mediación entre Dios y los hombres.”

¹²⁷ 187. “...en grado proporcional y con entera dependencia de Cristo....”

¹²⁸ 187. “...puesto que, por su maternidad divina, está colocada ontológicamente entre Dios y los hombres: inferior a Dios, pero muy superior a los hombres.”

¹²⁹ 187. “...puesto que realizó de hecho, asociada a Cristo Redentor, la corredención de mundo.”

¹³⁰ 182. “...es la que realiza el mediador por su propia excelencia y propios méritos, sin relación o recurso a ninguna otra persona.”

¹³¹ 182. “...es la que realiza un mediador que pone algo de su parte también, pero en estrecha y esencial dependencia de otro mediador más importante, que es el mediador principal.”

his own merits, without relation or recourse to any other person,”¹³² and Mary is the secondary mediator, “since she joined her sufferings to the blood of Christ, contributing secondarily and proportionately to the redemption of the world.”¹³³

The third class of mediation has to do with its effects and is three-fold: *dispositive*, *perfective* and *ministerial*. “The first,” explains Royo Marin, is limited to *preparing* for the mediation; the second *realizes* it in fact, and the third *applies* it.”¹³⁴ Christ’s “mediation was not merely *dispositive* (like that of the just of the Old Testament), but *perfective* in the full and absolute sense of the word; it was He who carried out the mediation in fact.”¹³⁵ Of course, Christ also *applies* the effects of His mediation, in particular, sanctifying grace, to us “through the sacraments and through His vital influx [which we receive] as members of His Mystical Body.”¹³⁶

According to Royo Marin, Our Lady also carries out this triple mediation, although he divides it according to different periods of her life: The dispositive mediation, “before the incarnation, hastening it with her prayers ... and afterwards feeding and taking care of the divine Victim, during the thirty years at Nazareth, who ... would have to save humanity”¹³⁷; the perfective mediation, “at the foot of the cross, because ... with her ineffable sufferings and with her tears, the Coredemptrix carried out the universal mediation in a way [which was] *secondary and essentially dependent* on the principal mediation of Christ”¹³⁸; and the ministerial mediation, “in-sofar as, by the divine disposition, she applies and distributes to each one of us, all and every one of the graces which we receive from God.”¹³⁹ However, the nature of Mary’s causality in distributing these graces is disputed, as we shall see later.

¹³² 185. “...puesto que realizó la redención *por sus propios méritos*, sin relación o recurso a ninguna otra persona.”

¹³³ 187. “...puesto que asoció sus dolores a la sangre de Cristo, contribuyendo secundaria y proporcionalmente a la redención del mundo.”

¹³⁴ 183. “La primera se limita a *preparar* la mediación; la segunda la *realiza* de hecho, y la tercera la *aplica*.”

¹³⁵ 185. “...su mediación no fue meramente *dispositiva* (como la de los justos del Antiguo Testamento), sino *perfectiva* en el sentido pleno y absoluto de la palabra; fue El quien *realizó* de hecho la mediación.”

¹³⁶ 185. “...mediante los sacramentos y a través de su influjo vital como miembros de su Cuerpo místico.”

¹³⁷ 187. “...antes de la encarnación, adelantándola con sus oraciones...y alimentando y cuidando después, durante los treinta años de Nazaret, a la divina Víctima, que...había de salvar a la humanidad.”

¹³⁸ 188. “...al pie de la cruz, porque...con sus dolores inefables y con sus lágrimas de Coredentora realizó la mediación universal de una manera *secundaria y esencialmente dependiente* de la mediación principal de Cristo.”

¹³⁹ 188. “...en cuanto que, por divina disposición, aplica y distribuye a cada uno de nosotros todas y cada una de las gracias que recibimos de Dios....”

Types of Merit

In order to have a better understanding of Our Lady's mediation of graces in comparison with her Son's, it is also helpful to discuss the different types of merit, so as to contrast Mary and Her Son's ability to merit grace for others, and to see how Our Lady's merit compares to the merits of others.

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "Merit and reward refer to the same, for a reward means something given anyone in return for work or toil, as a price paid for it. Hence as it is an act of justice to give a just price for anything received from another, so also is it an act of justice to make a return for work or toil."¹⁴⁰ However, since "justice is a kind of equality,"¹⁴¹ there is simple justice only where there is simple equality. Where there is no equality, neither is there strict justice. In the same way, "where there is justice simply, there is the character of merit and reward simply. But where there is no simple right, but only relative, there is no character of merit simply, but only relatively, in so far as the character of justice is found there, since the child merits something from his father and the slave from his lord."¹⁴²

Moreover, as Aquinas points out, there is no equality between man and God. Therefore, "there can be no justice of absolute equality [between them] ..., but only of a certain proportion, inasmuch as both operate after their own manner."¹⁴³ Aquinas notes here that since "the manner and measure of human virtue"¹⁴⁴ is from God Himself, "hence man's merit with God only exists on the presupposition of the Divine ordination, so that man obtains from God, as a reward of his operation, what God gave him the power of operation for."¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, even though man only has the power to do good due to the Divine motion, "since the rational creature moves itself to act by its free-will, hence its action has the charac-

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST*, I-II, q. 114, a. 1, resp. "meritum et merces ad idem referuntur, id enim merces dicitur quod alicui recompensatur pro retributione operis vel laboris, quasi quoddam pretium ipsius. Unde sicut reddere iustum pretium pro re accepta ab aliquo, est actus iustitiae; ita etiam recompensare mercedem operis vel laboris, est actus iustitiae."

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*. Latin text: "Iustitia autem aequalitas quaedam est...."

¹⁴² *Ibidem*. Latin text: "...in his in quibus est simpliciter iustum, est etiam simpliciter ratio meriti et mercedis. In quibus autem est secundum quid iustum, et non simpliciter, in his etiam non simpliciter est ratio meriti, sed secundum quid, in quantum salvatur ibi iustitiae ratio, sic enim et filius meretur aliquid a patre, et servus a domino."

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*. Latin text: "...non potest hominis ad Deum esse iustitia secundum absolutam aequalitatem, sed secundum proportionem quandam, in quantum scilicet uterque operatur secundum modum suum."

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*. Latin text: "Modus autem et mensura humanae virtutis homini...."

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*. Latin text: "Et ideo meritum hominis apud Deum esse non potest nisi secundum praesuppositionem divinae ordinationis, ita scilicet ut id homo consequatur a Deo per suam operationem quasi mercedem, ad quod Deus ei virtutem operandi deputavit."

ter of merit, which is not so in other creatures.”¹⁴⁶ This merit becomes supernatural when the good act is done by someone in the state of habitual grace, and it is accomplished with charity.

One should note, however, that the concept of merit is analogical, “because it is found, in meanings proportionately similar and subordinated, first in the merits of Christ, second, in the merits of the just, third, in the sinner’s dispositive preparations for sanctifying grace.”¹⁴⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange summarizes the ways in which we can speak of merit:

The merits of Christ, then, are founded on absolute justice, because Christ’s person is divine. The merits of the just are also founded on justice, not absolute, but *dependent on Christ’s merits*. To this merit, we give the name of “condigness,” which expresses a value, not equal to the reward, but proportioned to it. Condign merit rests on God’s ordination and promise, without which it could not give a right in the proper sense of the word.

But the just have also a second kind of merit, founded, not on justice, but on friendship, which presupposes grace and charity. To this kind of merit we give the name “merit of proper congruity.” The word “proper” is added to distinguish this merit, based on friendship, from the sinner’s dispositive merits, which are based, not on friendship with God, but on God’s liberality to His enemies. These merits too are called “merits of congruity,” but in a wider sense of the word.¹⁴⁸

It should be clear then, that the condign merit of the just is still not based on absolute justice, but is a kind of participation in the merits of Christ. The congruous merit of the just, on the other hand, is based on a kind of fittingness, rather than justice, which belongs to friendship with God.

After proving that no one can merit the first grace for himself (including the Blessed Virgin, who did not merit the first grace of her Immaculate Conception), St. Thomas Aquinas asks whether one person can merit the first grace for another. He begins to answer this question by explaining that our works can be meritorious in one of two ways, either “by virtue of the Divine motion; and thus we merit condignly; [or] ... according as they proceed from free-will in so far as we do them

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*. Latin text: “...quia creatura rationalis seipsam movet ad agendum per liberum arbitrium, unde sua actio habet rationem meriti; quod non est in aliis creaturis.”

¹⁴⁷ Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Reality: A Synthesis of Thomistic Thought*, ed. Paul A Böer, Sr., (Veritatis Splendor Publications, 2012), 347.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

willingly, and thus they have congruous merit, since it is congruous that when a man make good use of his power, God should by His super-excellent power work still higher things.”¹⁴⁹ Aquinas continues,

It is clear that no one can merit condignly for another his first grace, save Christ alone; ... inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, and the Author of human salvation But one may merit the first grace for another congruously; because a man in grace fulfills God's will, and it is congruous and in harmony with friendship that God should fulfill man's desire for the salvation of another.¹⁵⁰

In accordance with this understanding of Aquinas, Garrigou-Lagrange applies the above-mentioned classes of merit: The first, and “highest kind, which was that of the Incarnate Word, is merit which is perfectly and fully worthy of reward, *perfecte de condigno*: an act of charity of the God-Man, since it is the act of a divine Person, is at least equal in value to the reward, even when evaluated in strict justice.”¹⁵¹ As Head of the human race, Christ was also able to merit grace for *others* in strict justice.

“The second kind of merit is that of the person in the state of grace,” explains Garrigou-Lagrange. “It is a dogma of faith that every person in the state of grace and endowed with the use of reason and free will, and who is as yet a member of the Church militant, can merit an increase of charity and of eternal life with a merit commonly termed *de condigno*.”¹⁵² However, these acts are only worthy of a supernatural reward in the sense that they proceed from God's motions of grace, and not because they are actually equal in value to this reward of themselves in strict justice. In addition, as mentioned above, one cannot merit grace *de condigno* for another, but only for oneself, because this type of merit, in both Mary and the just, is incommunicable. Only Christ is able to merit grace *de condigno* for others.

However, Mary and the just can merit grace for others *de congruo proprie*, which is the third kind of merit, termed by Garrigou-Lagrange as the “merit of becoming-

¹⁴⁹ Aquinas, *STh*, I-II, q. 114, a. 6, resp. Latin text: “...ex vi motionis divinae, et sic meretur aliquis ex condigno... in quantum est caput Ecclesiae et auctor salutis humanae.... secundum quod procedit ex libero arbitrio, in quantum voluntarie aliquid facimus. Et ex hac parte est meritum congrui, quia congruum est ut, dum homo bene utitur sua virtute, Deus secundum superexcellentem virtutem excellentius operetur.”

¹⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, Latin text: “Ex quo patet quod merito condigni nullus potest mereri alteri primam gratiam nisi solus Christus.... Sed merito congrui potest aliquis alteri mereri primam gratiam. Quia enim homo in gratia constitutus implet Dei voluntatem, congruum est, secundum amicitiae proportionem, ut Deus impleat hominis voluntatem in salvatione alterius....”

¹⁵¹ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, 179.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 179-180.

ness [which] ... is founded on charity or friendship with God, rather than on justice.”¹⁵³ In other words, Christ “satisfied for us *in strict justice* by His human acts which drew from His divine personality an infinite value capable of making reparation Mary satisfied for us by a satisfaction based, *not on strict justice*, but on the *rights of the infinite friendship or charity* which united her to God.”¹⁵⁴ That is, the Blessed Virgin merited for us congruously, i.e., *de congruo*.

In *Ad Diem Illum*, Pope St. Pius X also notes this distinction in the kinds of merit, stating:

We are then, it will be seen, very far from attributing to the Mother of God a productive power of grace - a power which belongs to God alone. Yet, since Mary carries it over all in holiness and union with Jesus Christ, and has been associated by Jesus Christ in the work of redemption, she merits for us *de congruo*, in the language of theologians, what Jesus Christ merits for us *de condigno*, and she is the supreme Minister of the distribution of graces.¹⁵⁵

There also remains one other difference when we speak of the merit of the Blessed Virgin at Calvary versus the merit of others. As Most explains,

The term *merit* has a different sense when we speak of the merits of Christ and Mary on Calvary from what it has when any one of us merits. The merit of Calvary filled up a great reservoir of grace once and for all. Nothing is ever added to that treasury. When anyone merits now, he does not earn that a new grace be added to the treasury, but that something be withdrawn from the treasury and distributed.¹⁵⁶

Nevertheless, the question remains: can we rightly say that Our Lady is the distributor of *all graces*, or only of some?

¹⁵³ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour*, 180.

¹⁵⁴ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, 165. Italics added.

¹⁵⁵ Pope St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* (February 2, 1904), 14. Latin text taken from *ASS* 36:454: “Patet itaque abesse profecto plurimum ut nos Deiparae supernaturalis gratiae efficiendae vim tribuamus, quae Dei unius est. Ea tamen, quoniam universis sanctitate praestat coniunctioneque cum Christo, atque a Christo ascita in humanae salutis opus, *de congruo*, ut aiunt, promeretur nobis quae Christus *de condigno* promeruit, estque princeps largiendarum gratiarum ministra.”

¹⁵⁶ Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 39 n.1.

VII. Mediatrix of All Graces

Garrigou-Lagrange points out what we have noted above, namely, that “there is nothing to prevent there being mediators below Christ, subordinate to Him as secondary mediators, such as were the prophets and priests of the Old Law for the chosen people.”¹⁵⁷ He then adds, “It must thus be asked whether Mary is the universal mediatrix for all men and for the distribution of all graces in general and in particular.”¹⁵⁸

In his encyclical, Pope St. Pius X reminds us of a famous quotation regarding the function of Our Lady as mediatrix of all graces. He declares, “Yes, says St. Bernardine of Sienna, ‘she is the neck of Our Head, by which He communicates to His mystical body all spiritual gifts’ (Quadrag. de Evangel. aetern. *Serm.* x., a. 3, c. iii.).”¹⁵⁹ St. Bernardine also declares in his Sermon on the Nativity, “This is the process of divine graces: from God they flow to Christ, from Christ to his Mother, and from her to the Church I do not hesitate to say that she has received a certain jurisdiction over all graces They are administered through her hands.”¹⁶⁰

As noted above, Pope Leo XIII declares in *Octobri Mense* that every grace acquired by Our Lord is bestowed on us by Mary, and that absolutely no grace is given but by her: “It is right to say that *nothing at all* of the immense treasury of every grace which the Lord accumulated—for ‘grace and truth come from Jesus Christ’ (Jn 1:17)—*nothing* is imparted to us except through Mary.”¹⁶¹ In *Superiore Anno*, the same Holy Father also speaks of the Blessed Mother as “her whom He [God] has chosen to be the dispenser of *all* heavenly graces.”¹⁶²

St. Thomas Aquinas concurs in this understanding of the Blessed Virgin’s role in obtaining grace for her children, declaring, “The plenitude of grace in Mary was

¹⁵⁷ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, 162.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁹ Pope St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum Laetissimum* (February 2, 1904), 13-14. Latin text from *ASS* 36:454: “Maria vero, ut apte Bernardus notat, ... Nam ipsa est collum Capitis nostri, per quod omnia spiritualia dona corpori eius mystico communicantur.”

¹⁶⁰ St. Bernardine of Siena (d. 1440), *Sermon V de nativitate B.M.V.*, cap. 8; op. om., v. 4 (Lugduni, 1650), 96, as cited in Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 284.

¹⁶¹ Pope Leo XIII, *Octobri Mense*, 4, as found translated from the Latin in Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 287. “Ex quo non minus vere propri- etque affirmare licet, *nihil* prorsus de permagno illo omnis gratiae thesauro, quem attulit Dominus, siquidem gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est (Ioan. 1, 17), *nihil* nobis, nisi per Mariam, Deo sic volente, impertiri....” Italics added.

¹⁶² Pope Leo XIII, *Superiore Anno*, (August 30, 1884), 1. Text taken from www.vatican.va. Italics added. Latin text: “...quam ipse caelestium, gratiarum voluit esse administram.”

such that its effects overflow upon all men. It is a great thing in a Saint when he has grace to bring about the salvation of many, but it is exceedingly wonderful when grace is of such abundance as to be *sufficient for the salvation of all men in the world*, and this is true of Christ and of the Blessed Virgin.”¹⁶³ In fact, Our Lady was greeted by the Angel Gabriel as, literally, “one having been graced” (Lk 1:28).¹⁶⁴ Neubert points out, “Just as Christ possesses the plenitude of grace both for Himself and for all creatures together, so that ‘of his fullness we have all received’ [Jn 1:16], so also, with due proportion, she whom the angel greeted as ‘full of grace’ has received from God such a superabundance of grace that she possesses it for herself and for all men, so that of that fullness we all may receive.”¹⁶⁵

Garrigou-Lagrange also notes, in speaking of Our Lady’s “descending mediation”: “All kinds of grace are distributed by her, even, in a sense, those of the sacraments; for she merited them for us in union with Christ on Calvary. In addition, she disposes us, by her prayer, to approach the sacraments and to receive them well.”¹⁶⁶ He continues by pointing out that not only every kind of grace in general, but even each particular grace we receive, comes to us through the hands of Mary.

Is this not what the faith of the Church says in the words of the Hail Mary, ‘Holy, Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.’? This ‘now’ is said every moment in the Church by thousands of Christians who thus ask for the grace of the present moment. This grace is the most individual of graces; it varies with each of us, and for each one of us at every moment.¹⁶⁷

According to Most, the doctrine that Mary is the Mediatrix of all graces “is implicitly contained in the New Eve concept [mentioned above], for the first Eve, according to God’s original plan, was to have been, with Adam, the means of the transmission of sanctifying grace to all their descendents.”¹⁶⁸ Now Mary, as the

¹⁶³ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio salutationis angelicae*, (transl by Joseph B. Collins, New York, 1939, ed Joseph Kenny, as found online at dhspriority.org, a. 1. Italics added. Latin text: “quantum ad refusionem in omnes homines. Magnum enim est in quolibet sancto, quando habet tantum de gratia quod sufficit ad salutem multorum; sed quando haberet tantum quod sufficeret ad salutem omnium hominum de mundo, hoc esset maximum: et hoc est in Christo, et in beata virgine.”

¹⁶⁴ The Greek word is *κεχαριτωμένη* which is a feminine vocative perfect passive participle. The *Complete New Testament Greek* notes that “the perfect always expresses a state....” (*Complete New Testament Greek*, by Gavin Betts, (The McGraw-Hill Companies, 2003), 16.1/4.

¹⁶⁵ Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine*, 111.

¹⁶⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*, 171.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶⁸ Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 34.

New Eve, having joined in the offering of the New Adam on Calvary, has merited, together with her Son (although in a *de congruo* fashion, and always in subordination to Him), the graces of our redemption, and the right to dispense these graces to her spiritual children.

Miravalle asks the question of whether, since Mary was a historical figure, she could really be the Mediatrix of *all graces of all times*. First, as we noted above, Our Lady “did not mediate to herself her own Immaculate Conception.”¹⁶⁹ Rather, she mediates all other graces of the Redemption merited by Christ *for us*. Finally, there are varying modalities in her distribution of grace. Miravalle explains,

When the popes teach that all graces are distributed through the mediation of Mary, one can distinguish the different modes of this distribution in terms of historical time. Our Lady’s distribution of graces to humanity after her Assumption into heaven obviously possesses the greatest degree of *willed* or “moral” mediation. Before her Assumption into heaven, one can speak of Mary’s mediation of all grace at least in terms of her participation in the obtaining of all graces through her coredemptive cooperation ... which reaches its climax at Calvary.¹⁷⁰

This is because Mary’s mediation is “merely a unique, objective, and historic participation”¹⁷¹ in the universal mediation of Christ. “To deny thereby the universal character of Maternal Mediation is to misunderstand her unique participation in the universal mediation of the Savior, upon which the universality of Mary’s mediation of graces ... is dependent and sustained.”¹⁷²

In addition, as I shall discuss further, the Blessed Virgin is the spouse and instrument of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, “since *all the graces* of redemption come through the Holy Spirit, and the *Holy Spirit acts only through the Mediatrix*, then Mary is again rightly seen as the *mediatrix of all the graces of redemption* given to the human family.”¹⁷³

¹⁶⁹ Mark Miravalle, “The *Whole Truth about Mary*, Ecumenism and the Year 2000,” in *Mary Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations II, Papal, Pneumatological, Ecumenical*, 31.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁷¹ Miravalle, “The *Whole Truth about Mary*, 35.

¹⁷² *Ibidem*.

¹⁷³ Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 301.

VIII. The Causality of Mary

There are three main theories, however, as to what kind of causality Mary has with regard to the distribution of graces. Royo Marin notes, "All theologians admit that she enjoys the power of intercession."¹⁷⁴ However, the real issue regards whether or not Mary's causality goes beyond that of mere intercession. In other words, is she *merely* a moral cause, *merely* an intentional-dispositive cause, or is she also a physical-instrumental cause?¹⁷⁵ If it were *only* through her intercession that Our Lady obtained grace for us, she would be *merely* a moral cause of our sanctification. (In other words, if she, knowing our needs, were to efficaciously plead for us, offering to God her merits on our behalf, and no more.) If she simply produced in us a type of disposition that would call for grace, she would be *merely* an intentional-dispositive cause, i.e., one that capacitated specific persons to receive specific graces. But if Mary literally serves as a channel of grace for us, i.e., if she has a certain efficiency of her own, she would also be a physical-instrumental cause, similar to the causality of Christ's humanity in relation to His divinity. Royo Marin notes, "To distribute something presupposes possession, dominion, which, certainly, is not included in the concept of intercession [In] the theory of physical-instrumental causality, ... Mary serves as an independent *physical instrument*, through which the graces literally flow to us."¹⁷⁶ Of course, she remains always subordinate to the principal agent, who is God.

Although it does not seem possible to know for certain, it does appear that the strong words of both Popes and Saints cited above correspond better with the idea of Mary as a physical-instrumental cause. As Most points out, referring to a passage from Pope Leo XIII's *Jucunda Semper*, "The text has a more natural and full meaning if we suppose that grace after originating in the Divine Nature, and passing through the Sacred Humanity of Christ, next passes physically through Mary's instrumentality."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Royo Marin, *La Virgen Maria*, 199. "Todos los teólogos admiten que goza del poder de intercesión." Translation mine.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 40, 14.

¹⁷⁶ Royo Marin, *La Virgen Maria*, 200. He probably means "independent," in contrast to a "conjoined" instrument. "Distribuir algo presupone posesión, dominio, lo cual, ciertamente, no va incluido en el concepto de intercesión.... [En] la teoría de la causalidad física instrumental,... María sirve de *instrumento físico* independiente, a través del cual las gracias fluyen literalmente hasta nosotros." Translation mine.

¹⁷⁷ Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 38. The text referred to here is Pope Leo XIII's quotation in *Jucunda Semper*, (September 8, 1894), 5, of St. Bernardine of Siena, saying, "Every grace...has a threefold course. For, in accord with excellent order, it is dispensed from God to Christ, from Christ to the Virgin, and from the Virgin to us." St. Bernardine of Siena, *Serm. In Nativit. B.V.M.*, 6, as cited in Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 37.

Taking the sacraments with regard to Mary as an example, we can first say that the application of the grace dispensed through the sacraments “has been obtained through Mary’s power of intercession,”¹⁷⁸ i.e., through her prayers. Thus far we have Mary as a moral cause. However, we can take this a step further and add that “Mary also leads us to frequent the sacraments, and obtains for us the disposition to profit from them [intentional-dispositive cause].”¹⁷⁹ And finally, if we wish to go still further, we can trace the course of grace from the Divine Nature, through Christ’s Humanity, Mary, the Church, and the sacraments to us, in which case, we could state that Mary is also a physical-instrumental cause.

The meaning of this will be more clear if we understand the distinction and relationship between instrumental causality and the causality of the principal agent, as explained by St. Thomas Aquinas. He states,

an efficient cause is twofold, principal and instrumental. The principal cause works by the power of its form, to which form the effect is likened; just as fire by its own heat makes something hot. In this way none but God can cause grace: since grace is nothing else than a participated likeness of the Divine Nature But the instrumental cause works not by the power of its form, but only by the motion whereby it is moved by the principal agent: so that the effect is not likened to the instrument but to the principal agent.¹⁸⁰

Aquinas points out, however, that “an instrument has a twofold action; one is instrumental, in respect of which it works not by its own power but by the power of the principal agent: the other is its proper action, which belongs to it in respect of its proper form.”¹⁸¹ In other words, an axe in the hand of a carpenter cuts “by reason of its sharpness,”¹⁸² which belongs to its own form, yet the fact that it can make a piece of furniture is not due to itself, but due to the craftsman who wields it.

¹⁷⁸ Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 38.

¹⁷⁹ Most, *Mary in Our Life*, 38.

¹⁸⁰ Aquinas, *ST*, III, q. 62, a. 1, resp. Latin text: “...duplex est causa agens, principalis et instrumentalis. Principalis quidem operatur per virtutem suae formae, cui assimilatur effectus, sicut ignis suo calore calefacit. Et hoc modo non potest causare gratiam nisi Deus, quia gratia nihil est aliud quam quaedam participata similitudo divinae naturae.... Causa vero instrumentalis non agit per virtutem suae formae, sed solum per motum quo movetur a principali agente. Unde effectus non assimilatur instrumento, sed principali agenti....”

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, ad 2. Latin text, “...instrumentum habet duas actiones, unam instrumentalem, secundum quam operatur non in virtute propria, sed in virtute principalis agentis; aliam autem habet actionem propriam, quae competit sibi secundum propriam formam....”

¹⁸² *Ibidem*. Latin text, “...ratione suae acuitatis....”

Aquinas uses this same line of reasoning when he explains how the humanity of Christ is an instrument of His divinity. He explains,

for what is moved by another has a twofold action—one which it has from its own form—the other, which it has inasmuch as it is moved by another Hence, wheresoever the mover and the moved have different forms or operative faculties, there must the operation of the mover and the proper operation of the moved be distinct; although the moved shares in the operation of the mover, and the mover makes use of the operation of the moved, and, consequently, each acts in communion with the other.

Therefore in Christ the human nature has its proper form and power whereby it acts; and so has the Divine. Hence the human nature has its proper operation distinct from the Divine, and conversely. Nevertheless, the Divine Nature makes use of the operation of the human nature, as of the operation of its instrument; and in the same way the human nature shares in the operation of the Divine Nature, as an instrument shares in the operation of the principal agent.¹⁸³

We can understand Christ's mediation to be our primary analogate with regard to the mediation of the Blessed Virgin. Just as the divine power works through Christ's humanity as an instrument, so also, God causes grace through the mediation of Mary. Garrigou-Lagrange notes that "since physical instrumental causality was not an impossibility for the Sacred Humanity nor for the sacraments ... neither is it an impossibility for Mary. St. Thomas even admits that a miracle-worker is sometimes instrumental cause of a miracle, for example, when it is worked through a blessing. Not only can he obtain the miracle by his prayer, he may even perform it as God's instrument."¹⁸⁴ Here he cites Aquinas who teaches that "just as the

¹⁸³ Aquinas, *STh*, III, q. 19, a. 1, resp. "Quia actio eius quod movetur ab altero, est duplex, una quidem quam habet secundum propriam formam; alia autem quam habet secundum quod movetur ab alio.... Et ideo, ubicumque movens et motum habent diversas formas seu virtutes operativas, ibi oportet quod sit alia propria operatio moventis, et alia propria operatio moti, licet motum participet operationem moventis, et movens utatur operatione moti, et sic utrumque agit cum communione alterius.

Sic igitur in Christo humana natura habet propriam formam et virtutem per quam operatur et similiter divina. Unde et humana natura habet propriam operationem distinctam ab operatione divina, et e converso. Et tamen divina natura utitur operatione naturae humanae sicut operatione sui instrumenti, et similiter humana natura participat operationem divinae naturae, sicut instrumentum participat operationem principalis agentis."

¹⁸⁴ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, 205.

prophet's mind is moved by divine inspiration to know something supernaturally, so too is it possible for the mind of the miracle worker to be moved to do something resulting in the miraculous effect which God causes by His power."¹⁸⁵

Garrigou-Lagrange also points out a second argument in favor of a parallel existing between the physical-instrumental causality of Christ's humanity as an instrument of His divinity and the causality of the Blessed Virgin:

Besides the arguments from Scripture and Tradition for the physical instrumental causality of the Sacred Humanity there is a theological argument: to act physically as well as morally is more perfect than to act only morally. But we must attribute what is more perfect to the Humanity of Christ, provided it is not incompatible with the redemptive Incarnation. Hence we must attribute to the Humanity of Christ the physical instrumental causality of grace. This same argument is valid, within all due limits, if applied to Mary, and establishes our thesis [i.e., of the physical instrumental causality of Mary] as probable.¹⁸⁶

As we have noted, Mary's mediation began as *Mother*. Miravalle explains, "Mary's *moral and physical* mediation of Christ as *Mother* brought into the world the Uncreated Grace from which flows every grace received in his Body, which constitutes the People of God."¹⁸⁷ He later adds, in speaking of the mystery of the Visitation,

As soon as the *physical* presence of Mary, the *God-bearer*, was made known by her greeting to Elizabeth, 'the babe leapt in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit' (Lk 1:41). We see that Mary's physical presence, the living Tabernacle of the preborn Saviour, is a mediating cause of special events of graces For the Church sees in this scriptural reference to the joyful leap of the unborn John a more profound revelation of a *sanctifying action* through the presence of Mary, who physically mediates the presence of the unborn Christ.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Aquinas, *STh*, II-II, q. 178, a. 1, ad 1. "sicut mens prophetae movetur ex inspiratione divina ad aliquid supernaturaliter cognoscendum, ita etiam mens miracula facientis moveatur ad faciendum aliquid ad quod sequitur effectus miraculi, quod Deus sua virtute facit."

¹⁸⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, 205 n.13.

¹⁸⁷ Miravalle, "Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation," in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 276.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 277.

In other words, it was the grace of the Holy Spirit, mediated by the Blessed Virgin, which sanctified St. John the Baptist in the womb. Here one can see her as a true physical-instrumental cause of grace, containing within her womb God Himself, and able to confer this grace on others. Is there any reason to think that Mary would be less an instrument of God now in glory than she was when she walked this earth?

Pope St. John Paul II notes the “close link between *the sending of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit*.”¹⁸⁹ He adds that “there is also established a close link *between the mission of the Holy Spirit and that of the Son* in the Redemption. The mission of the Son, in a certain sense, finds its ‘fulfillment’ in the Redemption. The mission of the Holy Spirit ‘draws from’ the Redemption.”¹⁹⁰ Aquinas, who also understood this linking of the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, explains that “the Holy Ghost is possessed by man, and dwells within him, in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace. Hence the Holy Ghost Himself is given and sent.”¹⁹¹ That is, the Holy Spirit is the Gift of Sanctification: “But the Holy Spirit,” Miravalle explains

has chosen to perform his divine act of sanctification, which flows from the cross of Christ, *only through the mediation of his human but glorified spouse, Mary*, through whom the Author of all graces was first mediated to the world by the power of the same Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:35; Mt 1:18, 20). The Holy Spirit, as a divine person, and Mary, as an exalted human person, were given *one unified mission from the Father* after Calvary: both were *sent* to take the ineffable graces from the sacrifice of the Redeemer and to sanctify and transform the face of the earth by generously dispensing the gifts of eternal life to the human family.¹⁹²

In other words, just as Mary initially mediated the gift of her Son to the world through her “fiat,” so she also, in some way, mediates the graces of her Son’s Redemption to the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The theologian, Matthias Joseph Scheeben, declares, “Mary is the organ of the Holy Spirit, who works in her

¹⁸⁹ Pope St. John Paul II, *On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World* (Latin title is *Dominum et Vivificantem*), (Boston, MA: St. Paul Books and Media, 1986), 24 (37). Latin text: “...vinculum inter missionem Filii ac Spiritus Sancti missionem statuitur,” as found online at www.vatican.va.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, “Nexus pariter proximus constituitur inter missionem Spiritus Sancti ac Filii missionem in ipsa Redemptione. Certo quodam patto Filii missio in Redemptione « completur ». Missio autem Spiritus Sancti. « haurit » ex Redemptione....”

¹⁹¹ Aquinas, *STh*, I, q. 43, a. 3, resp. “...in ipso dono gratiae gratum facientis, spiritus sanctus habetur, et inhabitat hominem. Unde ipsemet spiritus sanctus datur et mittitur.”

¹⁹² Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 298.

in the same way that Christ's humanity is the instrument of the *Logos*. And this in a more complete and distinctive sense than can be the case of other created beings."¹⁹³ Miravalle adds to this,

The sanctifying activity of the Mediatrix must rightly be traced to her mission as the *human instrument of the Holy Spirit* in their one, unified mission of sanctification given by the Father. This understanding and model of Mary as the human instrument of the Holy Spirit in the distribution of graces, comparable to the humanity of Christ as human instrument of the Word, is a monumental breakthrough in understanding the mysterious distribution of graces by the Spirit and Mediatrix.¹⁹⁴

This "breakthrough" is seen particularly in a letter by St. Maximilian Kolbe, which explains the deep union between the Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother. He declares,

The Holy Spirit is in Mary after the fashion, one might say, in which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the Word, is in his humanity. There is, of course, this difference: in Jesus there are two natures, divine and human, but one single person who is God. Mary's nature and person are totally distinct from the nature and person of the Holy Spirit. Still, their union is inexpressible, and so perfect that the *Holy Spirit acts only by the Immaculate, his spouse*.¹⁹⁵

That is, the Holy Spirit imparts grace only by the mediation of Mary. Edouard Hugon notes, "The exterior fecundity of the Divine Paraclete is the production of grace, not in the order of moral causality—for the Holy Ghost is not a meritorious or impetratory cause—but in the order of physical causality From this it follows that the Holy Ghost produces grace physically in souls by Mary: she is the *secondary physical instrument* of the Holy Ghost."¹⁹⁶ Of course, Mary remains always an instrument; she is not, nor can she be, the Author of Grace, which is a prerogative belonging to God alone.

¹⁹³ Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Mariology*, tr. T. Geukers (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), v. II, 185.

¹⁹⁴ Miravalle, *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 299.

¹⁹⁵ St. Maximilian Kolbe, *Letter to Fr. Salezy Mikolajczyk*, (July 28, 1935), as found in H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe*, (Libertyville, IL: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977), 41. Italics added.

¹⁹⁶ Edouard Hugon, *La causalité instrumentale en théologie*, (Paris: Tequi Pierre, 1907), 203, as found in Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, 210-211. Italics added.

If it appears that on this point, theologians have overstepped proper boundaries, allow me to cite a pastoral letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary put out by the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The letter invites us to “explore together as Christians ... the bond between Mary and the Holy Spirit,”¹⁹⁷ explaining, “Any correct understanding of Mary’s role must be seen in connection with the predominant role of the Holy Spirit. The Bible provides us with a starting point: St. Luke presents Mary as the humble woman overshadowed by the Holy Spirit in order that Christ be formed.”¹⁹⁸

IX. A Fifth Marian Dogma?

The question of whether or not Mary’s mediation of all graces should be declared a fifth Marian dogma has often arisen in recent centuries. The four Marian dogmas taught *de fide* so far are the dogma of Mary as Mother of God or *Theotokos* (431); her perpetual virginity (649 and 1555); her Immaculate Conception (1854); and her Assumption (1950). Therefore, the question arises: Should Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces be declared a fifth Marian dogma of the Catholic Church?

We have clearly seen that Mary’s mediation of all graces is already a part of the teaching of the ordinary Magisterium of the Church, as evidenced in numerous papal documents. It has also been preached widely by the Church Fathers, as well as by more modern-day saints. In addition, as Miravalle notes, “Benedict XV further granted to the ordinaries of the world who petitioned for it, along with Belgium, permission to celebrate the Liturgical Office and Mass of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces.”¹⁹⁹ Miravalle then adds in a footnote, “Based on the Mass and Office of Mediatrix of all Graces of 1921, the Congregation for Divine Worship approved a Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother and Mediatrix of Grace in 1971, cf., *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, v. 1, Sacramentary The new liturgy refers to Mary as the ‘treasure-house of all graces.’”²⁰⁰

But is that reason enough to publicly proclaim Our Lady’s mediation a dogma? First of all, let us look a little closer at what is meant by the development of dogma. Journet explains succinctly,

¹⁹⁷ *Behold Your Mother: Woman of Faith*, Pastoral Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, (Washington, D.C.: Publications Office, United States Catholic Conference, 1973), 112 (41).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹⁹ Miravalle, “Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Foundational Presence in Divine Revelation,” in *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 289, citing *La Vie Diocésaine*, v. 10, 1921, 96-106, *Rescript of the Sacred Congregation of Rites*, January 12, 1921.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

On the one hand that which was contained in the original deposit [of faith] explicitly is ever kept in mind by the living authority of the Church, while, on the other hand, that which was contained in the original deposit implicitly, still in a preconceptual, unformulated way, obscure, yet forceful and unavoidable, is explained and put forward in a conceptual and formulated way by the living authority of the Church.²⁰¹

He goes on to explain that this “passage from implicit to explicit gives birth to dogma.”²⁰² Therefore, “new” dogmas

are new, not by their substance or content, but by the way in which they express and manifest this substance or content. The early Church did not of course know them expressly, but it knew their source, the articles of faith from which they have been derived. Far from disavowing them as they now are, it would rather realize that it had always held and confessed them in their root and principle.²⁰³

Yet, not all articles of faith are officially declared dogma. As Journet notes, “Down the ages, it has been to safeguard the transcendence of the truths of faith, as first formulated in the Gospel, against conscious or unconscious rationalizations that dogmas have been defined.”²⁰⁴ What truths of the faith are safeguarded by declaring Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces? Although I do not have the space here to examine all the advantages (or possible disadvantages) to proclaiming Our Lady’s mediation to be a dogma of faith, I will mention a few now.

First of all, one could anticipate the following advantages, or benefits: 1) an increased devotion to Mary as the Mother of God and our Mother and Mediatrix before God, resulting also in a renewal of the practice of spiritual motherhood (i.e., a mediation for others by way of intercession) in all baptized persons; 2) a more theologically-correct understanding of Our Lady’s role in the plan of salvation, bringing about a greater sense of gratitude in the Church toward her; and 3) as a result of the above, a deeper understanding of the mystery of Christ and of His Church.

²⁰¹ Charles Journet, “What is Dogma?,” in *The Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, Section I: Knowledge and Faith, vol. 4, ed. Henri Daniel-Rops, (New York, NY: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1964), 54.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 60.

²⁰⁴ *Ibidem.*

With regard to the first, Miravalle explains that “The definition would help each baptized person to better understand that Mary is, in a unique way, the Mother by whom each baptized person exercises his/her own spiritual motherhood, mainly through the apostolate of prayer.”²⁰⁵ That is, we practice spiritual motherhood in mediating for others by way of intercession.

As for the second point, “The definition would express the gratitude of the Church toward the very Holy Virgin for her unique and privileged collaboration in the mystery of her Redemption by Christ ..., and of her sorrowful compassion, at the foot of the Cross.”²⁰⁶ Here we see one of the key principles from which flows Mary’s mediation, which is her coredemption. Of course, this coredemption really began with her “Fiat,” in agreeing to become the Mother of the Redeemer.

Finally, with respect to the third advantage to proclaiming the dogma of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces, one should note that Pope Bl. Paul VI stated in his discourse at the conclusion of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, “Knowledge of the true Catholic doctrine concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary will always be an efficacious aid to correctly understanding the mystery of Christ and of the Church.”²⁰⁷ That is, by growing in our understanding of Mary’s role as Mediatrix, we also see more clearly how the Church is to relate to Christ, her Spouse, and in particular, how the Church is called to participate in His mediation and in His reconciliation of the world to the Father.

I will now list some disadvantages, or objections to declaring Mary’s mediation a dogma and possible responses to these. Bertrand de Margerie poses and replies to three objections with regard to another possible future dogma concerning Mary’s spiritual maternity, but which are equally applicable with regard to her mediation: The first objection he poses is “*a definition seems useless*, since precisely, this truth is already recognized as a truth of faith [by the ordinary magisterium].”²⁰⁸ In reply, de Margerie answers that

a dogmatic definition, as it is evident in the great trinitarian [*sic*] and christological [*sic*] councils, perfects the ecclesiastical knowledge of the truth, for it may not be easy for certain mem-

²⁰⁵ Miravalle, *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 210.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

²⁰⁷ Pope Bl. Paul VI, *Conclusioni della III Sessione del Concilio Vaticano II: Allocuzione del Santo Padre, Paolo VI*, 28. Latin text: “...cognitio verae doctrinae catholicae de Beata Maria Virgine semper subsidium erit efficax ad recte intellegendum mysterium Christi et Ecclesiae.” Translation mine.

²⁰⁸ Bertrand de Margerie, “Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers,” transl. by Salwa Hamati, (191-214) in Miravalle, *Mary, Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 199.

bers of the People of God to discern clearly the revealed truth, recognized as such by the Church with the help of its ordinary magisterium alone. A definition does not only bring out the considered truths, but more so helps to distinguish it from related truths.²⁰⁹

Another objection is that of “the ‘*ecumenical scandal*’ of a possible definition.”²¹⁰ In other words, would officially proclaiming Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces not become an obstacle to any reunification of Protestant communities or Orthodox Churches with the Catholic Church? While it is true that the proclamation of this dogma would likely result in objections coming from Protestants, Orthodox, and even some Catholics, de Margerie notes it is *not* that the definition “would constitute *in itself* an obstacle,” since this truth is already held by the Church.²¹¹ In fact, he points out that there were similar fears regarding the definition of the Assumption by Pope Pius XII, but nevertheless, “this definition did not impede the promulgation, fifteen years later, ... of the Decree on Ecumenism by Vatican Council II. Neither, consequently, was the great development of the ecumenical bond that resulted interrupted.”²¹²

Indeed, promulgating Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces as a dogma might actually facilitate Christian reunification. Pope Leo XIII clearly states the role of Our Lady in uniting Christians in his encyclical, *Adjutricem Populi*:

Mary will be the happy bond to draw together, with strong and yet gentle constraint, all those who love Christ, wherever they may be, to form a nation of brothers, yielding obedience to the Vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff, their common Father For Mary has not brought forth—nor could she—those who are of Christ except in the one same faith and in the one same love.²¹³

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 205.

²¹¹ *Ibidem*.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 206.

²¹³ Pope Leo XIII, *Adjutricem Populi*, (September 5, 1895), 17 and 27, as found online at www.vatican.va. Latin text from *ASS* 28:129-136, ed. Victorii Piazzesi, (Romae: S. Congr. de Propaganda Fide, 1895-1896; reprinted in New York, NY: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1969), 135: “Mariam nimirum felix vinculum fore, cuius firma lenique vi, eorum omnium, quotquot ubique sunt, qui diligunt Christum, unus fratrum populus fiat, Vicario eius in terris, Pontifici romano, tamquam communi Patri obsequentium.... Nam qui Christi sunt, eo Maria non peperit nec parere poterat, nisi in una fide unoque amore....”

Finally, de Margerie lists the objection concerning whether this truth “has already reached the degree of maturity necessary for its definition? Are there not still numerous discussions and disagreements among Catholic theologians on Mary’s mediation, on the nature of her association to the redemptive work of Christ...? *How could the Church define a doctrine that does not appear to be fully developed?*”²¹⁴

De Margerie responds,

A dogmatic definition would not have to enter into or take part in technical discussions among theologians; it is not the custom with the supreme magisterium of the Church to do that, or to suppress the freedom of discussion among theologians in matters that are not of faith; But it is obvious that the Church can define, by virtue of its extraordinary magisterium, a doctrine that it already considers as *de fide*..., without going into academic disputes, without pretending that no other subsequent study in depth be feasible any more. There will always be theological controversies about Mary, just as there are about Christ or the Trinity. After an eventual definition ..., within the unity of a deeper and more conscious faith, the freedom of research and theological discussions on many aspects of the defined mystery will persist.²¹⁵

Other possible objections to the defining of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces can be found in the work of Emil Neubert. One common objection he gives is that “Mary is not necessary to God.”²¹⁶ In other words, God does not “need Mary to distribute His gifts to men,”²¹⁷ but can distribute these graces to us directly. Neubert admits that this is certainly true, but adds, “What we wish to know is not whether God *must*, but whether He *wishes* to use Mary in the distribution of graces; not whether the distribution of all graces by Mary is intrinsically necessary, but whether it is necessary because of a free decree of God.”²¹⁸

A second objection listed by Neubert is the fact that other saints also intercede on our behalf. Can God not distribute grace to us directly through them? Certainly He could. Yet, as noted above, He *wills* that even the graces obtained for us by the saints should come to us through His Mother. The reason for this, explains Neu-

²¹⁴ De Margerie, “Can the Church Define Dogmatically the Spiritual Motherhood of Mary? Objections and Answers,” in Miravalle, *Mary, Coredeptrix, Mediatrix, Advocate: Theological Foundations*, 207-208. Italics original.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

²¹⁶ Cf. Neubert, *Mary in Doctrine*, 108.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem.*

²¹⁸ *Ibidem.*

bert, “is not the sanctity of Mary but her co-operation in the Redemption. If some saint had co-operated, as Mary did, in the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Redemption, that is to say, in the acquisition of grace, we could rightly conclude that he would be able to distribute grace as Mary does.”²¹⁹

Neubert also points out a papal decision which makes it clear that even the graces that come to us from the saints first pass through Mary’s hands. Citing the canonization of St. Joan of Arc, Neubert notes that one of the two miracles accepted in proof of her sanctity was a “a cure resulting from prayers addressed both to her [St. Joan of Arc] and to Our Lady of Lourdes.”²²⁰ When some wanted to exclude this miracle from the process of canonization (since a miracle attributed to two saints is automatically disregarded), Pope Benedict XV chose to admit it, explaining,

if in all miracles, it is fitting to recognize Mary’s mediation, by which according to the Divine Will all graces and all benefits come to us, we could not deny that in one of the miracles indicated above this mediation of the Most Holy Virgin was manifested in a very special manner. We believe Our Lord has so disposed things in order to remind the faithful that they should never forget Mary, not even when it seems that a miracle should be attributed to the intercession of a Blessed or of a Saint.²²¹

Finally, Neubert inquires whether sacramental grace can truly be subject to the Blessed Virgin’s intercession, asking, “Does not the sacrament have its effect by its own power, *ex opere operato* ...? Is Mary’s intercession necessary?”²²²

However, as Neubert points out, this objection lacks real merit, because “it must include a sophism since it could be used against the universal intercession of Christ as well as against that of His Mother.”²²³ In addition, he says, “in the granting of sacramental graces Mary intervenes just as she does in the ... [other cases], for it is she who obtains for the soul the grace to receive the sacrament together with the grace it confers.”²²⁴

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 109. Neubert adds a footnote here (n. 54) with regard to St. Joseph, who did cooperate “in these mysteries in a certain way, and that is why he, too, enjoys a certain universal power of intercession. But since his co-operation in the Redemption was only mediate and inferior to that of Mary, his power of intercession is also mediate—being exercised through Mary—and inferior to that of his Spouse.”

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, citing *La Documentation Catholique*, Vol. 1, Apr. 19, 1919.

²²² *Ibid.*, 110.

²²³ *Ibidem.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 111.

So, then, ought the mystery of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces be proclaimed a dogma of the Catholic Church? In the judgment of Garrigou-Lagrange,

There is therefore no serious difficulty against defining Mary's universal mediation as a dogma of faith, provided it is understood as we have indicated: as a mediation subordinate to that of Jesus and depending on His merits; as a mediation which is not considered to add any necessary complement to Jesus' merits, the value of which is infinite and superabundant, but which shows forth the influence and fruitfulness of those same merits in a soul fully conformed to Him Mary's universal mediation seems to be even more certain, if we consider the principles which underlie it: the divine maternity, the motherhood of men, and the venerable tradition which contrasts Mary and Eve [i.e., Mary's coredemption]. Since this is so, and since the ordinary *magisterium* of the Church makes Mary's universal mediation to be theologically certain, we can only hope and pray that it be one day defined so as to increase devotion to her who is the watchful and loving Mother of all men.²²⁵

X. Conclusion

In this essay, I have discussed what it means to be a mediator and have shown that, although Christ is truly the "one mediator between God and man," we are all called to share, in some subordinate way, in this mediation, by interceding for souls and seeking to lead them to God. Just as we participate in God's perfections both on a natural and supernatural level, so we are also called to participate in Christ and in His mediation.

Mary, by reason of her divine maternity, in particular, and also because of her cooperation with her Son in the redemption of souls and her spiritual motherhood of all mankind, participates in Christ's mediation in a special manner. Like her Son, hers is a universal mediation, although one which always remains subordinate to His. She is the New Eve, exercising at least a moral and dispositive causality, and seemingly also a physical-instrumental causality, analogous to that of the humanity of Christ, in conferring grace upon all men. She is the Spouse of the Holy Spirit, who worked through her in the Incarnation, and continues to work through her in her spiritual motherhood. Popes and saints throughout Church history have, con-

²²⁵ Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Mother of the Saviour and Our Interior Life*, 221-222. Words in brackets added.

sequently, honored her with the title of “mediatrix.” We have also seen that Mary is the Mediatrix of *All* Graces, both particular and general.

In addition, I have discussed specific differences between Christ’s mediation and that of Mary (e.g., His mediation is principal, whereas hers is secondary to His), as well as differences in merit, i.e., although she was not able to merit the first grace of her Immaculate Conception, she did merit, at least *congruously*, the graces of redemption for others, together with Her Son, through her participation in His sufferings, whereas He merited for us *de condigno*.

Finally, we have seen that to proclaim Mary’s mediation of all graces as the fifth Marian dogma certainly appears to be well-founded and beneficial for members of the Catholic Church and for all who seek to follow Our Lord. It would not only result in an increased devotion to Our Lady as Mediatrix and Mother, with a resulting promotion of spiritual motherhood among her children (i.e., a mediation for others by way of intercession), but it would also make Mary’s role in salvation history more clear and thus, also, clarify the role of the Church and the Church’s relationship to Christ.

No one on this earth can have had a closer relationship to Jesus Christ than His Mother. In coming to understand better the special role Divine Providence gave her as Mediatrix of All Graces, we thereby come to know more intimately Her Son, since, as a true Mother, she always points us toward Him.

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María Corredentora: Explicación y Conveniencia de su Proclamación Dogmática¹

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I. Explicación de la corredención: Colaboración esencial en la obra redentora de Cristo

El término “corredentor/corredentora” es un adjetivo, un concepto humano, que pretende expresar y sintetizar con exactitud en un “título” la participación de María Santísima en la obra salvífico-redentora de Jesucristo.

1. Los conceptos humanos, limitados pero necesarios

Las palabras humanas, los términos que empleamos en teología, son siempre **limitados**: son vocablos de un lenguaje en sí finito, incapaz de expresar plenamente la realidad de Dios y su obra, que trasciende todo concepto.

No obstante, son a la vez **necesarios**: necesitamos de ellos para expresar la realidad divina lo mejor que podamos. De hecho, la Iglesia siempre se ha esforzado por formular con precisión lo que cree, el depósito de la fe recibida, vinculando la fe incluso a algunos conceptos, términos o expresiones verbales. Con respecto a los términos empleados para expresar la fe, en la historia de la teología generalmente se han seguido uno de estos dos caminos:

Por una parte, se han usado palabras ya existentes en el lenguaje común. Así, estas palabras han sido reelaboradas, redefinidas, o se les ha añadido connotaciones nuevas. Véase por ejemplo el concepto latino de *persona*: en su origen se empleaba en el teatro griego para designar la máscara de los actores, y después de evolucionar en su significado a lo largo del tiempo, finalmente la Iglesia la empleó para referirse al Padre, al Hijo y al Espíritu Santo, las tres *personas divinas*.

Por otra parte, la Iglesia también ha inventado palabras nuevas que no existían, ha formulado nuevos conceptos para expresar lo más profundo

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del misterio. Por ejemplo, inventó el neologismo griego *homoousios* (consubstancial, de la misma esencia o naturaleza), para poder expresar la plena divinidad del Hijo frente a la herejía arriana del siglo IV.

La necesidad de usar palabras para expresar la fe ha obligado a la Iglesia a definir bien el significado de cada término. Son conceptos/palabras que sirven para expresar, conceptualizar y profundizar en la *regula fidei* (regla de la fe), permitiendo así ahondar en el propio misterio de la fe recibida.

Por eso mismo, a la hora de usar el término *corredentora* aplicado a María, debe explicarse su contenido y conveniencia (o inconveniencia), para que no pase como en el siglo IV con la crisis arriana. En aquel momento, los cristianos ortodoxos de Oriente rechazaron a los ortodoxos de Occidente por considerarlos triteístas (o monarquianos, según los casos), y viceversa, por considerarlos monofisitas o arrianos. Esto sucedió por una comprensión errónea del contenido que cada uno volcaba en los distintos conceptos empleados.²

Sólo cuando San Hilario de Poitiers, desterrado al Oriente, y San Atanasio, desterrado al Occidente, tomaron contacto con la Iglesia del lugar, pudieron comprender el contenido ortodoxo de algunos términos que ellos consideraban heréticos.³ Así, empezaron a entenderse los cristianos ortodoxos de Oriente y Occidente, y pudieron unirse frente al error arriano.

Así pues, por la importancia de comprender bien el contenido de los conceptos, trataremos de explicar con la mayor precisión y simplicidad posible, qué significa el título de Corredentora. Para ello, en primer lugar, se debe comprender qué es la Redención.

2. Síntesis de la obra salvífica

La redención y salvación del género humano se ha realizado por la encarnación del Verbo de Dios (cf. Jn 1), especialmente, en el **misterio pascual de Jesucristo**, que va de la celebración de la última cena al envío del Espíritu Santo en Pentecostés, teniendo como momento culminante la pasión, muerte y resurrección de Cristo.⁴ Este acontecimiento salvífico del siglo I es perfecto en sí mismo. No le falta nada: el hombre ya ha sido redimido y salvado por Cristo, único salvador y redentor del género humano.

² Para profundizar en esta cuestión, cf. M. SIMONETTI, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* (Studia ephemeridis Augustinianum 11; Institutum patristicum Augustinianum, Roma 1975).

³ Cf. SIMONETTI, *La crisi ariana nel IV secolo* 220-227.

⁴ Cf. *Dei Verbum* 2.

Por la redención, el hombre obtiene el perdón de todos sus pecados, la reconciliación con Dios y la comunión con Él, la filiación divina por Jesucristo, la plenitud del Espíritu Santo, el acceso a la vida eterna y la futura resurrección gloriosa.⁵

Para que esta salvación alcanzase a todos los hombres de toda época, Jesucristo fundó la Iglesia con todos los elementos necesarios (entre los que sobresale la sucesión apostólica), de tal modo que hiciese presente en el mundo el misterio pascual de Cristo.⁶ Así, se va consumando el plan salvífico de Dios hasta que se instaure definitivamente el reino de Dios en los últimos tiempos (cf. Ap 21-22).

3. Títulos relacionados con la obra salvífico-redentora

Podemos distinguir fundamentalmente tres títulos relacionados con la obra salvadora de Dios apenas descrita: redentor, corredentor, y colaborador.

3.1. *¿A quién puede corresponder el título de Redentor? ¿Qué rasgos implican este título?*

“Redentor” es aquel que redime y, por tanto, que perdona y salva. El redentor, para poder perdonar el pecado, debe ser necesariamente Dios, el único que quita el pecado del mundo.⁷

A su vez, para poder redimir al género humano, debía ser de naturaleza humana. La obra de la redención no podía ser un simple acto de Dios desde el cielo diciendo: “Os perdono, quedáis redimidos.” Eso no era suficiente, no bastaba: por eso el Hijo eterno del Padre se encarnó y se hizo hombre.

Asimismo, para vencer al pecado y a la muerte, tenía que asumir sobre sí todo pecado, y pasar por la muerte (morir verdaderamente), y vencer a la muerte resucitando definitivamente. Todo ello sucede en el misterio pascual de Cristo, el único a quien corresponde el título de “Redentor” (cf. 1 Tím 2:5).

Por tanto, el título de redentor no podría corresponder a María, en primer lugar, porque no es de naturaleza divina y, en segundo lugar, porque no fue ella la que llevó a cabo el misterio pascual.

3.2. *¿A quién puede corresponder el título de Colaborador de la redención? ¿Qué rasgos implican este título?*

“Colaborar” en la redención es ayudar activamente de algún modo en la redención de Cristo. Podemos llamar “colaborador” a cualquier cristiano que cumpla con

⁵ Cuando San Pedro en el discurso de Pentecostés anuncia el *kerygma*, ante la pregunta de qué deben hacer ahora que Cristo ha resucitado, responde: “Convertíos y sea bautizado cada uno de vosotros en el nombre de Jesús, el Mesías, para perdón de vuestros pecados, y recibiréis el don del Espíritu Santo” (Hch 2:38).

⁶ Cf. *Dei Verbum* 7-10.

⁷ Recuérdese la reacción escandalizada de los judíos cuando Jesús perdona los pecados al paralítico: ¿quién se cree éste?, ¿quién puede perdonar pecados fuera de Dios? (cf. Lc 5:21).

su vocación y, por tanto, colabore con la misión de la Iglesia en hacer presente en el mundo la salvación de Cristo (su misterio pascual). Aunque Cristo es el único Redentor, el Nuevo Testamento deja claro que es posible cooperar con él en la redención (cf. 1 Cor 3:9; Col 1:24).

Son colaboradores eminentes los santos, o los sacerdotes al celebrar los sacramentos, o los catequistas y misioneros al anunciar el evangelio, o los enfermos al ofrecer sus padecimientos por la salvación de los pecadores. Podrían recibir este título, de modo genérico, también los ángeles.

3.3. ¿A quién puede corresponder el título de Corredentor? ¿Qué rasgos implican este título?

“Corredimir” no es “redimir con,” como si fuese “redimir junto al redentor,” pues el único que redime es Cristo. Esa interpretación de *corredentor* sería *inaceptable* para la fe y nadie podría ostentar semejante título con ese significado.

“Corredimir,” sin embargo, se refiere a un modo especial de colaborar con el redentor en su acción salvífica. Este título podría corresponder sólo a alguien que haya participado directamente en la redención de Cristo de un modo singular, único, irrepetible y esencial. Pero no se trataría, por tanto, de una acción redentora diferente de la de Cristo.

El título “Corredentor” quiere expresar una colaboración que haya sido *directamente* necesaria para que se dé la redención; es decir, que sin esa colaboración no habría tenido lugar la salvación. María, en cuanto **madre de Dios**, con su *hágase en mí según tu palabra* (cf. Lc 1:38), posibilitó la encarnación. Es, por tanto, un acto directo y necesario para el plan salvífico: sin María Dios no habría podido hacerse hombre ni morir por nosotros, pues toda la carne y sangre humana del redentor procede de María. La humanidad de Cristo, ofrecida como expiación en la cruz, procede enteramente de María (a diferencia de la humanidad de los demás seres humanos, que procede de dos seres humanos, el padre y la madre).⁸

Asimismo, puesto que la redención es la victoria sobre el pecado, consideramos que sólo puede ser corredentor alguien que no haya sido vencido nunca por el pecado, ni por el original, ni por pecado personal, y que, además, haya vivido siempre en plenitud de gracia divina. María, en cuanto **Inmaculada**, concebida sin pecado original, y llena de gracia (cf. Lc 1:28: *kecharitomenê*), está en condiciones de ser corredentora por su ausencia de pecado.

Igualmente, puede ser corredentor sólo quien haya tenido una vinculación esencial con el **ministerio** de Cristo y su **misterio pascual**:

⁸ También han sido necesarios, para que se diese la encarnación, los padres de María, y todos sus antepasados... pero son sólo *indirectamente* necesarios. Directamente lo es sólo María, que conscientemente dice sí a la encarnación del Verbo.

En las **bodas de Caná** (cf. Jn 4), María obtiene de su hijo el primer milagro de su ministerio para los hombres. Se manifiesta aquí otra condición para ser corredentor: el deseo de traer redención y salvación a los hombres, expresado en la preocupación de María por los novios.

En la **última cena**, como en la cruz, el cuerpo que se ofrece por nosotros y la sangre que se derrama por la salvación de los pecados proceden de la humanidad de María, aquella que ha gestado el cuerpo de Cristo, alimento de vida eterna, y el propiciatorio de nuestros pecados (cf. Rom 3:25).

En la **pasión**, crucifixión y muerte de Jesús, María no sólo está acompañándole físicamente como testigo privilegiado de ese acontecimiento (cf. Jn 19:25), sino que además, vive esa pasión y muerte internamente por la vinculación esencial con su hijo, más que nadie de los presentes. Su propia y verdadera pasión, esencialmente unida a la de Cristo, se la anunció Simeón en el Templo: “a ti misma una espada te traspasará el alma” (Lc 2:35), haciéndola a los pies de la cruz víctima viva y real unida al único sacrificio redentor de su Hijo. El sufrimiento de la pasión es redentor: “Dios, para quien, y por quien existe todo, juzgó conveniente, para llevar a una multitud de hijos a la gloria, perfeccionar y consagrar con sufrimientos al guía de su salvación” (Heb 2:10); y María está esencial e íntimamente vinculada a ese sufrimiento, al que seguramente aluden los tormentos y dolores de parto de Ap 12:2.⁹

María experimenta la **resurrección** de Cristo no sólo por tener noticia de ella, y creer en ella, y participar de ella sacramentalmente por la pertenencia a la Iglesia, como los demás discípulos. Su participación en la resurrección pascual es total y plena al final de su vida terrena al subir al cielo. De hecho, es la única que ya vive gloriosa en cuerpo y alma con Cristo (cf. dogma de la Asunción).

Por último, también está unida al misterio de **Pentecostés** (aunque ya estaba llena del Espíritu Santo, cf. Lc 1:28), pues suplicaba con la Iglesia naciente la venida del divino Paráclito (cf. Hch 1:14; 2:1).

⁹ Cf. San Juan Pablo II, *Salvifici doloris* 25: “los numerosos e intensos sufrimientos [de María] se acumularon en una tal conexión que [...] fueron también una contribución a la redención de todos. [...] fue en el Calvario donde el sufrimiento de María Santísima, junto al de Jesús, alcanzó un vértice ya difícilmente imaginable en su profundidad desde el punto de vista humano, pero ciertamente misterioso y sobrenaturalmente fecundo para los fines de la salvación universal. Su subida al Calvario, su ‘estar’ a los pies de la cruz junto con el discípulo amado, fueron una participación del todo especial en la muerte redentora del Hijo.”

Por tanto, María está esencial e íntimamente vinculada al misterio pascual, el acontecimiento salvífico-redentor de la humanidad, donde Cristo nos redime por la ofrenda que hace de sí mismo.¹⁰

A esto hay que añadir que María colabora en **hacer perfecta la ofrenda de Jesucristo**, en dos sentidos:

1. Para que algo sea *perfectamente ofrecido*, deben ofrecerlo todos aquellos que tienen algún *derecho* (por así decirlo) sobre el don. Así, por ejemplo, en el sacrificio de Isaac, la ofrenda es plena por parte de Abraham, su padre, que lo ofrece de corazón a Dios (cf. Gn 22). Si, como dice el targum, Isaac también se ofrece a sí mismo para que el sacrificio sea perfecto, la ofrenda es más plena. Y sería perfecta si su madre Sara (dato que desconocemos) también hubiese aceptado la ofrenda. Pues bien, el sacrificio de Cristo es plenamente perfecto porque tanto Él, como su Padre Dios, como su madre María, lo ofrecen al mundo sin oponerse a su entrega. Más bien, se unen a ella. De no haberlo ofrecido también María, Jesús sería un don arrebatado a su madre, más que un don plenamente entregado.

2. María también hace perfecta la ofrenda salvífica de Cristo porque la acoge plenamente, haciéndola efectiva. Por la propia *dinámica del don*, para que éste se lleve a cabo exige que haya un donante, un don, y alguien que acoja el don. María es precisamente la primera que acoge el don de Cristo en su seno (cf. la anunciación) y la primera receptora de la redención de su Hijo. En nombre de la humanidad, acoge también el don de la salvación que es Cristo al pie de la cruz. Sin esta acogida, el don —y por tanto la redención— quedaría frustrado.¹¹

Por último, pensamos que correspondería el título de “corredentor” sólo a alguien que haya vivido toda su vida, al igual que el redentor, como una ofrenda agradable a Dios, como una víctima viva. Es, entre otras cosas, lo que expresa la perpetua **virginidad** de María: ha sido siempre de Dios, siempre consagrada a Él, viviendo en cuerpo y alma como posesión suya y de nadie más; como su Hijo, el Redentor. Ella es la esclava del Señor (Lc 1:38).¹²

En conclusión: a María puede corresponder perfectamente el título de “Corredentora,” pues en ella se dan todas las exigencias que consideramos podría reclamar

¹⁰ Como señala el Concilio Vaticano II, la Virgen María está “unida con lazo indisoluble a la obra salvífica de su Hijo” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 103).

¹¹ Ciertamente muchos otros han acogido el don de Cristo, pero María fue la primera y la que más perfectamente lo recibió.

¹² “Se consagró totalmente como esclava del Señor a la persona y a la obra de su Hijo, sirviendo con diligencia **al misterio de la redención con Él y bajo Él**, con la gracia de Dios omnipotente. Con razón, pues, piensan los Santos Padres que María no fue un instrumento puramente pasivo en las manos de Dios, sino que **cooperó a la salvación de los hombres** con fe y obediencia libres. Como dice San Ireneo, ‘obedeciendo, se convirtió en **causa de salvación** para sí misma y **para todo el género humano**’” (*Lumen Gentium* 56).

dicho título. Nótese, además, la estrecha relación de este título con los cuatro dogmas marianos: madre de Dios (*theotokos*), siempre virgen, inmaculada, y asunta al cielo en cuerpo y alma.

4. Anunciado desde el principio (Gen 3)

En el mismo momento en que entró el pecado en el mundo (cf. Gen 3), Dios anunció la victoria definitiva sobre su causante, a saber, el diablo (cf. Sab 2:21-24), dirigiéndole estas palabras: “Pongo hostilidad entre ti y la mujer, entre tu descendencia y su descendencia; ésta te aplastará la cabeza cuando tú la hieras en el talón” (Gen 3:15).

Es el primer anuncio de la futura redención, en la que el maligno y el pecado serán definitivamente vencidos al ser aplastada su cabeza. Pero, ¿quién llevará a cabo dicha victoria redentora?

Según la versión hebrea, “ésta te aplastará la cabeza” remite a la descendencia de la mujer, es decir, a la humanidad, aludiendo al grupo de los redimidos que obtendrán la victoria final.

Esa descendencia fue entendida en masculino singular por el judaísmo, viendo una referencia al futuro mesías. De ahí que la versión griega (LXX), oficial en el judaísmo del siglo I, traduzca directamente por “él te aplastará,” esto es, el descendiente por antonomasia, el mesías, Cristo.

La versión latina de la Vulgata, recogiendo la tradición eclesial, refirió el pronombre a “ella,” la mujer, que hacía referencia a la madre del mesías, esto es, a María.

Las tres versiones (hebrea, griega y latina) no son excluyentes entre sí, sino al contrario, son complementarias. Así pues, en el primer anuncio de la salvación en sus tres versiones podemos ver recogidos a todos los protagonistas de la obra salvífico-redentora: al redentor, a la corredentora, y a los colaboradores de la redención.

5. La redención en la historia salvífica

En los hitos de la vida de Cristo relacionados con la obra redentora destaca la **intercesión eterna de Jesucristo**, único Mediador entre Dios y los hombres, constituido por ello Sumo y Eterno Sacerdote. En el cielo, sentado a la derecha del Padre, Jesucristo sigue intercediendo por todos los hombres. Y en la tierra, por medio de la Iglesia, por la sucesión apostólica, sigue siendo el único Pastor, Maestro y Salvador de la humanidad, ejerciendo este ministerio en la historia hasta la consumación de la misma.¹³ Su salvación llega hasta nosotros, histórica y tempo-

¹³ Cf. capítulo II de la Constitución Dogmática *Dei Verbum*.

ralmente, a través de los sacramentos de la Iglesia en la que Él ejerce el único Sacerdocio, uniendo en Él a los hombres con el Padre.

Ahora bien, María ha sido **asociada a la mediación única y eterna del Hijo** (y por tanto también a su mediación histórica durante la existencia de la Iglesia), cuando en la cruz nos ha sido entregada como Madre (cf. Jn 19:25). Recibe entonces la misión de ser madre espiritual de la Iglesia naciente y, en definitiva, de toda la humanidad.¹⁴ Y en cuanto madre de todos, tiene la función de ser corredentora, mediadora y abogada de la humanidad. De hecho, su maternidad espiritual recibida de Cristo al pie de la cruz, es la confirmación por parte de su Hijo de su ministerio de corredentora.

Desde ahí se comprende, a partir del dogma de la Asunción y de los títulos y fiestas que proclaman su coronación en el Cielo (como Reina de los Ángeles y de toda la humanidad), que María no sólo es corredentora por su colaboración en la encarnación y en el misterio pascual. Ella sigue ejerciendo su rol de corredentora por estar inseparablemente asociada al Sacerdote Eterno que es Cristo, y en Él interceder sin descanso por la humanidad (especialmente por los pecadores), cumpliendo la misión recibida en la cruz.

Por su participación plena de la gloria en cuerpo y alma de su Hijo Jesucristo queda esencialmente asimilada a su función mediadora entre Dios y los hombres. Así, durante el período histórico de la Iglesia, ejerce su **función maternal** en cuanto **corredentora**, por la vinculación esencial a su Hijo Sumo Sacerdote, intercediendo también ella (inseparablemente unida a Cristo) al Padre por nosotros.¹⁵

6. Conclusión

La expresión “María Corredentora” quiere expresar el papel único de María colaborando con el único redentor del mundo. Es un título que ya emplea la tradición cristiana para expresar la vinculación esencial de María a la acción salvífico-

¹⁴ Cf. San Juan Pablo II, *Redemptoris Mater* 47: “María está presente en la Iglesia como Madre de Cristo y, a la vez, como aquella Madre que Cristo, en el misterio de la redención, ha dado al hombre en la persona del apóstol Juan. Por consiguiente, María acoge, con su nueva maternidad en el Espíritu, a todos y a cada uno en la Iglesia, acoge también a todos y a cada uno por medio de la Iglesia.”

¹⁵ De hecho, en la proclamación dogmática de la asunción de María al cielo, el Papa Pío XII vincula ambos aspectos, la asunción de María y su asociación con el Redentor y su obra redentora, por medio de su dolor y ofrenda de sí misma, su fe y su abandono a la voluntad del Padre. Es llamada entonces “generosa Socia del divino Redentor” (Pío XII, *Munificentissimus Deus* 40).

redentora de su Hijo, perfecta en sí misma.¹⁶ No parece haber otro concepto que manifieste mejor esta realidad.

	Títulos relacionados con la redención		
	Redentor	Corredentor	Colaborador
Naturaleza	Divina y humana.	Humana inmaculada.	Humana redimida.
Acción	El que redime.	El que está esencialmente unido al que redime, a la acción redentora, y posibilita la redención.	El que hace llegar la redención al mundo, o la completa en sí mismo.
Necesidad para la redención	Absolutamente necesario.	Necesario por designio divino.	No necesario, pero conveniente.
A quién corresponde	Jesucristo	Santa María	Los santos

II. Conveniencia de la proclamación dogmática de María como corredentora

1. Santa Teresa de Calcuta

El interés por la proclamación de un quinto dogma mariano en la Iglesia nace en cualquiera que lea esta llamativa afirmación de Santa Teresa de Calcuta, del 14 de agosto de 1993, que reviste cierto carácter profético:

The papal definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix, and Advocate will bring great graces to the Church = La definición papal de María como Corredentora, Mediadora (o mediatrix, o medianera), y Abogada, traerá grandes gracias a la Iglesia.¹⁷

Al mismo tiempo, esta afirmación suscita las siguientes preguntas: ¿Por qué depende de una afirmación pública y solemne del Papa que Dios derrame gracias

¹⁶ Cf. A. B. CALKINS, “El Misterio de María Corredentora en el Magisterio Papal,” en: <http://es.catholic.net/op/articulos/15816/cat/653/el-misterio-de-maria-corredentora-en-el-magisterio-papal.html> (30-04-2017).

¹⁷ Previamente a estas palabras, Santa Teresa de Calcuta sintetiza la fundamentación de los títulos marianos: “María es nuestra Corredentora con Jesús. Ella dio a Jesús su cuerpo y sufrió con él al pie de la cruz. María es la Mediadora de toda gracia. Ella nos dio a Jesús, y como madre nuestra nos obtiene todas sus gracias. María es nuestra Abogada, que reza a Jesús por nosotros. Sólo a través del Corazón de María llegamos nosotros al Corazón Eucarístico de Jesús. La definición papal de María como Corredentora, Mediadora (o mediatrix, o medianera), y Abogada, traerá grandes gracias a la Iglesia. Todo para Jesús a través de María.”

sobre la Iglesia? ¿Eso es propio de su plan de salvación? Nadie puede oponerse a que Santa Teresa crea que María merece esos títulos; incluso el Magisterio y la tradición se los han otorgado a María en varias ocasiones, pero ... ¿por qué, entonces, proclamarlo dogmáticamente y no simplemente dejar que quien quiera lo crea? ¿Qué gana la Iglesia con ello, aparte de un posible disgusto por parte de los hermanos separados, tan sensibles a los aspectos marianos?

2. Reflexión bíblica

Para arrojar luz sobre estas preguntas vamos a acudir al padre de nuestra fe, a Abraham, con quien Dios inició la historia de la salvación hace aproximadamente cuatro milenios. Quizá nos iluminen las primeras palabras que Dios le dirigió:

El Señor dijo a Abrán: «Sal de tu tierra, de tu patria, y de la casa de tu padre, hacia la tierra que te mostraré. Haré de ti una gran nación, te bendeciré, haré famoso tu nombre y serás una bendición. Bendeciré a los que te bendigan, maldeciré a los que te maldigan, y en ti serán benditas todas las familias de la tierra.»
(Gen 12:1-3)

Es curioso que Dios, desde el principio, bendiga a uno solo y no a todos. Pero, sobre todo, es llamativo que haga depender la bendición para todos los demás del hecho de que bendigan a éste que Él ha escogido y bendecido. Dicho con otras palabras: en su plan quiere bendecir a todos a través de uno, a condición de que “esos todos” se sumen a bendecir al elegido de Dios. Si lo bendicen recaerá sobre ellos la misma bendición de Abrán; en cambio, si lo maldicen, su misma maldición caerá sobre ellos por llamar “maldito” lo que Dios ha declarado “bendito.” La conclusión es obvia: conviene que todos bendigan a Abrán para alcanzar así su propia salvación/bendición. Dios les exige salir de sí mismos y reconocer su elección, aunque les pueda parecer injusta o arbitraria. Veamos lo que dice al respecto el exegeta P. Beauchamp:

El elegido es el único por excelencia, el bendecido, pero bendecido a favor de todos. En torno a este individuo, a este separado, va a girar el destino de todas las familias de la tierra, es decir, de la humanidad. “Bendeciré a los que te bendigan, maldeciré a los que te maldigan” (Gen 12:3). *Pregunta:* ¿deberán reconocer entonces los hombres la autoridad de Abrahán, honrarle y, en definitiva, adoptar sus creencias? –*Respuesta:* solamente tendrán que bendecirle. Puesto que la única alternativa consiste en *bendecir o maldecir*, hay que concluir que *maldecir* es una posibilidad real. Los hombres tendrán la tentación de maldecirle, a él y a Dios a través

de él. En efecto: ¿por qué haber bendecido a uno solo, *por qué no a mí*, o –crítica más sutil– (más *correcta*) – por qué no a todos? Éste es el escándalo que produce la elección de Israel [y en el fondo, de María], el escándalo de toda elección divina. –*Respuesta*: todos son bendecidos, absolutamente todos, si bendicen a uno solo; esa es la condición. –*Pregunta*: a la promesa que se le hace a Abrahán no se le pone ninguna condición; ¿es eso justo? –*Respuesta*: ahí es donde aflora la envidia que impide bendecir; el envidioso lo es de Dios y de su vida. La vida que nace de Dios y que se da no tiene otra causa que ella misma. El amor divino no tiene causa: Dios ama a todas las familias de la tierra y quiere que ellas lo sepan por medio de Abrahán. ... En realidad, Dios dice a un individuo, a Abrahán: “¿Te amo tanto que me haga cargo de ti y quiero que todos los hombres lo sepan y que, al saberlo, te bendigan!”¹⁸

En efecto, en el origen de la historia salvífica se expresa la necesidad de que todos bendigan a uno para que esa salvación que Dios ha soñado para todos llegue a su plenitud. Exactamente lo mismo pasa con el misterio de la elección de María Santísima, cuyo papel o rol en la historia salvífica es prefigurado por Abraham. Es necesario que todos la bendigan lo más globalmente posible, para que la bendición llegué a toda la humanidad como plenitud salvadora.

Por eso dice ella misma en el Magnificat: “Desde ahora me felicitarán todas las generaciones, porque el Poderoso ha hecho obras grandes en mí” (Lc 1:48-49). Estas palabras de María no brotan de la soberbia, ni del deseo de ser ensalzada, sino todo lo contrario ... de haber captado en su profundidad esta dinámica salvífica de la elección de Dios: todas las generaciones, al felicitar y bendecir a María, hija fidelísima de Abrahán, su fruto más puro, hacen recaer sobre sí mismos no sólo la bendición del patriarca de la fe, sino la propia bendición de la Madre de Dios. María lo sabe, y exulta por la salvación que alcanzarán todos los que la bendigan, a pesar de que al hombre no siempre le resulta fácil bendecir a otro que no sea él mismo. Ya le sucedió a Caín, que en vez de alegrarse fraternalmente por la bendición de Abel y unirse a ella, beneficiándose así de ésta, tuvo envidia; quiso ser él el elegido, el bendecido, y por eso perdió toda bendición (cf. Gen 4:1-16).

Reconozcámoslo: Dios pide algo imposible; la historia de Caín, que mató a Abel porque Dios prefería la ofrenda de este último, era ya buena prueba de ello. ... La luminosa llamada de Abrahán

¹⁸ P. BEAUCHAMP, *Cincuenta retratos bíblicos* (BAC Popular 200; BAC, Madrid 2014) 4-5.

se abre a múltiples peligros. Dios ha pedido a las naciones que lo bendigan (cf. Gen 12:1-3). ¿Hay que preocuparse ya por Abrahán y ver por anticipado una sombra sobre el futuro de las naciones, a las que Dios pone la difícil prueba de pedirles que bendigan a su elegido? Ser bendecido no es penoso; tampoco debería serlo bendecir ... Pero, ¡cuántos conflictos se anuncian!¹⁹

Esta pedagogía de la elección está presente en toda la historia de la salvación: Dios elige a Jacob frente a Esaú, a José frente a sus hermanos, a Israel frente a todos los pueblos, a la tribu de Leví y a la casta de Aarón frente a todas las demás, a David frente a Saúl, etc. No se trata, por lo tanto, de un elemento anecdótico en la historia del Plan de salvación.

Por otra parte, como decía Beauchamp, no debería ser penoso ni bendecir a Abrahán, ni a ninguno de los elegidos de Dios, ni tampoco -decimos nosotros- bendecir a María. Cuanto más si, por lo reflexionado en torno a la llamada de Abrahán, Dios hace depender de ello que su bendición llegue en plenitud a la humanidad.

Por tanto, bendecir a María con un 5º dogma que reconozca y proclame la grandeza que Dios ha hecho en ella, sería una acción perfectamente acorde con la pedagogía divina empleada en su plan de salvación. Se puede así entender a la luz de Gn 12 la lluvia de gracias, anunciada por Santa Teresa de Calcuta, para cuando se proclame dicho dogma.

Ciertamente, la Iglesia no tiene un modo más solemne, profundo y radical de bendecir a María en todo el mundo que proclamando un dogma. Que el Papa en nombre de toda la Iglesia proclame la verdad de María como colaboradora esencial de la obra salvífico-redentora de su Hijo, haciéndola una verdad de fe, una verdad obligatoria para todos los católicos, es atraer sobre toda la Iglesia la bendición de Dios. Es adaptarse a la pedagogía divina que Él mismo nos ha enseñado y nos ha exigido. Proclamar este dogma es hacer que todos los católicos bendigan a María como Corredentora, Mediadora y Abogada, y así abrirles el corazón a la bendición de Dios, que quiere así hacer llegar a todos la misma bendición que derramó sobre María.

He aquí la grandísima *conveniencia actual* de proclamar dicho dogma. He aquí -casi podríamos decir- la necesidad de proclamar este dogma, para que toda la gracia que Dios tiene destinada para la humanidad se derrame. He aquí, en este breve artículo, un fundamento bíblico-teológico que hace entender la petición de Santa Teresa de Calcuta. Sería una gran pena, y una gran responsabilidad, privar a la Iglesia de tanta bendición por no llegar a bendecir a María con este dogma.

¹⁹ BEAUCHAMP, *Cincuenta retratos bíblicos*, 6-7.

3. Conveniencia ecuménica

En el siglo IV convino fijar la fe sobre la divina naturaleza de Jesucristo con el término ***homoousios***, a pesar de que esto produjo cismas con los arrianos y separaciones profundas en la Iglesia.

En el siglo XXI, cuando los cristianos estamos divididos en católicos, ortodoxos y protestantes, consideramos que conviene fijar la colaboración única de María a la obra salvífica de su Hijo con el término **Corredentora**.

Si un término aplicado al Hijo separó a los cristianos del siglo IV, un término sobre su madre nos llevará a la unidad en el siglo XXI, aunque humanamente pueda pensarse que nos separará más.

Cuando nuestra alma, el alma de la Iglesia, a través de una definición dogmática, proclame la grandeza del Señor que ha hecho obras grandes en su humilde esclava María (cf. Lc 1:46ss), será posible que ella lleve a cabo la unidad de sus hijos. Si en una familia los hermanos se distancian entre sí, el mejor camino para su reconciliación es la labor amorosa y reconciliadora de la propia madre. La unidad de los cristianos no será fruto de los esfuerzos humanos (que no obstante nunca deben faltar), sino un don del cielo a través de María (aparente obstáculo del ecumenismo): ella, como madre, es la única capaz de reunir en una sola familia a sus hijos separados.

4. Conveniencia dogmática

Hay una conveniencia actual de profundizar y clarificar el papel esencial de la colaboración de María en la obra redentora y salvífica de Cristo, que debería cubrirse con la proclamación del 5º dogma, en perfecta armonía con los 4 dogmas previos. Se haría así justicia a la realidad intercesora de María, constante en la historia de la Iglesia.

Tómese como como botón de muestra la oración del Avemaría: es, sin duda, la oración más veces elevada al cielo por parte de los fieles. Piénsese sólo en los miles de rosarios rezados a diario en el mundo, con decenas innumerables de Avemarías. La Virgen intercede por nosotros ante el Padre constantemente. María es nuestra abogada, aunque sólo fuese por esta oración del Avemaría: “ruega por nosotros pecadores.” Ella es la gran intercesora del mundo.

Ahora bien, dogmáticamente hablando, ¿por qué proclamar esta verdad a través de un dogma es conveniente y salvífico? Porque cuando Jesús dio su misión a Pedro, le dijo: “Te daré las llaves del reino de los cielos; lo que ates en la tierra quedará atado en los cielos, y lo que desates en la tierra quedará desatado en los cielos” (Mt 16:19). Estas palabras no se refieren sólo al poder de perdonar los pecados, sino también de desatar el poder salvador encerrado en una verdad dogmática. Así,

cuando la Iglesia proclama un dogma está descorriendo el velo de una verdad, descubriéndola y haciéndola patente al mundo. Al manifestar dicha verdad está desatando una fuerza salvífica, permitiéndola entrar en el mundo. Cuando la Iglesia dice “María es así,” pone luz en un aspecto, pone verdad, permite que esa verdad sea recibida, y se desencadene el dinamismo de la gracia.

Por tanto, si la verdad de María Corredentora es proclamada como dogma, se hace partícipe de los beneficios de esa corredención a todos los cristianos. La verdad es salvífica en sí misma. Afirmar que María corredime potencia esa acción de María, por el valor performativo de la palabra dogmática de la Iglesia, que no sólo informa a los fieles de cómo es la realidad, sino que también actúa eficazmente en la salvación del mundo al acoger dicha verdad, hacerla suya y proclamarla como dogma.

5. Al pie de la cruz

Jesús hace a María Madre de los discípulos y madre de la humanidad (en cuanto que todos los hombres están predestinados a ser hijos en el Hijo), cuando dice a María: “ahí tienes a tu hijo” (Jn 19:25). Ella no ha dejado de ejercer durante toda la historia esa maternidad espiritual, bajo la que se recogen las funciones de Corredentora de sus hijos, Mediadora e intercesora suya, y Abogada. Pero corresponde ahora a la Iglesia acoger esa maternidad espiritual de María (tal como la acogió Juan), proclamando dogmáticamente la verdad de la misma. Hasta que el hijo espiritual (la Iglesia) no proclame plenamente esta verdad, no permitirá que María desarrolle en todo su esplendor su maternidad para con la Iglesia y con la humanidad.

Catechetical Thinking in the Face of Critical Theory: Developing a Marian Understanding

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Introduction

The development of a Marian understanding of catechesis offers the most adequate response to certain problematic trends, prominent in some catechetical thinking during the post-conciliar period, trends that draw from currents of thought associated with educationalists influenced by critical theory. “Critical theory” refers in the first place, of course, to the Frankfurt School and is associated with the works of Horkheimer and Adorno. As social and political theorists, they offered analyses of society in the light of what they perceived to be the potentially liberating and emancipating possibilities in institutions, structures and relationships. A number of educational theorists subsequently took up their work, viewing educational structures primarily through the lens of whether they lead to greater social transformation through action. Among these, Paolo Freire¹ has been especially important in the influence he has had on a whole generation of educationalists, especially those of a Marxist-Feminist persuasion – theorists such as Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren. Friere’s educational theory has been described as “virtually canonical” for radical and critical pedagogical theorists.² An important intersection between critical theory and catechesis lies in the influence of Freire on the work of Thomas Groome in the United States and on Marcel van Caster in Europe.³

To find in Mary the central inspiration for developing such a response is particularly appropriate since the academic discipline of catechetics focuses on what St

¹ The key works unpacking his educational philosophy are Paolo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972) and *Education for Critical Consciousness*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973).

² So Nicholas C. Burbules, “The Limits of Dialogue and a Critical Pedagogy,” in Peter Trifonas, *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Cultural Politics, Education, and Discourse of Theory* (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 255.

³ Van Caster set out his position immediately following Freire’s work, in Marcel Van Caster, “A Catechesis for Liberation,” *Lumen Vitae* 27, 2 (June 1972), 281–303. For Groome’s indebtedness, see his *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1981), 175–177, and his description of Freire as “likely the most prophetic voice on pedagogy of the twentieth century,” *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent*, (Allen, Texas: Thomas More, RCL Company, 1988), 103.

John Paul II described as the “original pedagogy” of the faith,⁴ and by the use of this phrase John Paul was encouraging a sustained reflection on the doctrines of the faith for the sake of discerning implications for their transmission. John Paul was aware that the Second Vatican Council had described Mary precisely as the one who “mirrors” such a pedagogy, perfectly embodying God’s saving work through her response of faith.⁵ For this reason, he described Mary as a “living catechism”⁶—the mysteries of the Faith are made visible and accessible in Mary, while at the same time she protects the integrity of these same mysteries.

The recent magisterial documents on catechesis, then, help us to understand Mary’s pivotal role for catechetical pedagogy. The 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* explains that if we study salvation history we can see the divine pedagogy in action: “The salvation of the person, which is the ultimate purpose of revelation, is shown as the fruit of an original and efficacious ‘pedagogy of God’ throughout history.”⁷

The “gradual stages” of this original pedagogy culminate in what the *Letter to the Hebrews* calls the “last days,” the time when God sent his Son.⁸ If this is the case then the original pedagogy of God is revealed most fully at the point of the sending of the Son, of the Incarnation. At the moment of the annunciation and the response of Mary’s *fiat* we have the account of the unique event of God’s Word taking flesh—the transmission of the fullness of God’s revelation. We see God’s pedagogy revealed in its fullness. At the Annunciation, the messenger of God appears, entrusted with “words of instruction and of catechesis,”⁹ to communicate the way in which the pedagogy of God throughout history has led to this moment of grace in the fullness of time, when the Word is to be handed over for the “whole fullness

⁴ See John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* (hereafter *CT*), 58; cf Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997; hereafter *GDC*), 137–147. For a recent collection analysing this original pedagogy see Caroline E. Farey, Walraud Linnig, and M. Johanna Paruch, FSGM (eds.), *The Pedagogy of God: Its centrality in Catechesis and Catechist Formation*. Steubenville: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2011. Such a reflection necessarily enters into dialogue with theories of development and of learning, at both philosophical and applied levels, for the sake of this original pedagogy, one of divine “condescension,” in which God’s revealing of himself takes place in and through human modes of communication. A helpful overview of some of these modes is provided in Joseph White, *The Way God Teaches: Catechesis and the Divine Pedagogy*. Huntingdon, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 2014.

⁵ “Mary unites and mirrors within herself the greatest teachings of the faith” (*Lumen Gentium*, 65); cf *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (hereafter *CCC*) 148–149.

⁶ *CT*, 73. For a helpful analysis of the background of this latter title and the catechetical implications see Wisam Khadouri, *Mary, “Living Catechism” and “Mother and Model of Catechists,”* MA Thesis (Birmingham: Maryvale Institute, 2009).

⁷ *GDC*, 139.

⁸ See Heb 1:1–2; cf *CCC*, 65, following an account of the stages of the pedagogy in 54–64.

⁹ *GDC*, 139.

of deity” to dwell “bodily.”¹⁰ At this point in salvation history we can see how God unites human nature to himself, salvifically, no longer in “gradual stages,” but now fully and completely. A careful and contemplative analysis of the Gift at this moment, therefore, unveils the very heart of God’s pedagogy. It also allows us to understand, by analogy, the way in which the living Word can be received by every mind and will and through this assent and adherence “impregnate” the whole of a person’s life.¹¹ The conception of the Word in Mary takes place through the agency of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you,” and it is here that we see, historically and archetypically, the mode of the transmission of the Word as it is handed on for the accomplishing of God’s redemptive mission.¹² In the light of these considerations, then, it seems appropriate to describe God’s pedagogy as a “Marian Pedagogy,” and for an understanding of the fullness of this pedagogy to focus especially on the narrative of the annunciation, since a sympathetic analysis here enables us to investigate the pedagogy at its moment of greatest fullness. The recent magisterium appears to be pointing us towards Mary as the one through whom we can most deeply understand the craft of the transmission of the faith.¹³

Critical theory: problems with transmission

How, then, might this Marian pedagogy assist us in offering a response to the difficulties raised by critical theory, especially in the area of didactic modes of education? Pedagogies of transmission involving didactic elements are suspected of being merely “banking” models, whereby one who has something of value “deposits” the learning in the one lacking it.¹⁴ Such pedagogies are seen as “infantilising” adult learners, treating the recipients of education as passive receptacles of learning. The idea of “transmission” is thought to involve overthrowing a mutuality which should be at the heart of education—or at least of adult education. “Transmission”

¹⁰ Col 2:9.

¹¹ The metaphor belongs to John Paul: see *CT*, 20: “Catechesis aims therefore at developing understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God’s word, so that the whole of a person’s humanity is impregnated by that word.”

¹² See *GDC*, 140. In the Greek text, neither of the two words, “come upon” (ἐπερχομαι) and “overshadow” (ἐπισκιάζω), used by the angel to Mary have, in fact, any particular connotation of conception: the point here, which is especially pertinent for understanding the annunciation as the model for the ongoing transmission of the Word, is that both *emphasise the divine agency in this transmission*. See D.T.Lundry, “Narrative Logic in the Annunciation to Mary (Lk 1:26-38),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 114.1 (1995), 66.

¹³ By way of further confirmation we also see Pope Francis speaking of a particular Marian “style” that he wishes to see adopted in all evangelization. See Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 18, 288, 284.

¹⁴ The phrase comes originally from Freire, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 57ff.

appears to be problematic in that it places the catechist in the position of a “giver” and the learner in the position of a “receiver,” of one who is taught.

At the close of his apostolic exhortation on catechesis John Paul specifically asks for Mary’s intercession since “no one has been ‘taught by God’ (cf. Jn 6:45) to such depth.”¹⁵ John Paul’s comment highlights both the difficulty with catechesis from the point of view of critical theorists and at the same time the significantly different understanding of learning and of the human person proposed by the Church in her magisterial teaching.

The problem, on closer examination, has to do with critical theory’s valuing of activity over receptivity: the teacher in didactic mode is seen as one who is superior to the learner, for the latter merely “receives” what the teacher gives. In this case, to understand the process of catechesis as a “handing on,” or of a “transmission” from teacher to learner, or from “master” to “disciple” is seen as problematic since it appears to involve a relationship of superior to inferior, with the dignity of the learner being threatened or impugned. The question begins to crystallise around the question: how is human dignity related to the necessary receptivity involved in being taught?

Critical theory interprets “being taught” as a problem because of an implied superiority of the position of the teacher, the giver. This general concern about a transmission model is intensified in so far as there is also any attempt to take up a position on behalf of an “authority” which one represents: this is seen as even more of a self-arrogation of the teacher beyond those being taught. So, for example, Roger Simon worries that teachers, “forgetting our own limitations and speaking as if we were the mouthpiece of the universal,”¹⁶ can unleash terrible expressions of the Nietzschean will to power.

There seems to be a twofold aspect to this concern. The first is that there is a potentially unlimited movement, under a dynamism of personal arrogance, that would tend in the direction of the catechist seeking to achieve absolute hegemony. The catechist, speaking on behalf of the Transcendent, would seek increasing power over the learner, unless this movement towards transcendence was curtailed. This, then, is essentially a worry about power and its abuse.

The second worry appears to be about the effect of the movement towards transcendence on the catechist’s perspective on teaching and learning, and especially on the view taken of the dignity of the learner. The catechist, who must indeed

¹⁵ *CT*, 73.

¹⁶ Roger I. Simon, *Teaching against the Grain: Texts for a Pedagogy of Possibility*, (New York: Bergin and Garvey, 1992), 72.

speak the “word from above,”¹⁷ seeking to speak adequately with regard to the transcendent Source of his message, is seen as necessarily identifying himself more and more with the transcendent position, to the extent that he comes to see himself as the centre of the learning and teaching environment, thereby reducing the learners to the status of objects. As the catechist’s subjectivity moves more to the fore, the subjectivity of the learners recedes and the world the catechist faces is increasingly a world of pure objects. With a Midas-touch, the catechist is left facing a world emptied of subjectivity.

Because of the reluctance to accept a clear place for the activity of *teaching* in catechesis one tendency among those educationalists influenced by critical theory is to play down the importance of any systematic transmission of the faith. Attention is drawn instead to the informal contexts available for supporting the development of the Christian through the different stages of formation. However, due attention is no longer given to the central importance of the organic, comprehensive and systematic catechesis which all magisterial documents insist should lie at the heart of the transmission of the faith.¹⁸

A more radical response to concerns over the use of an educational model of teaching to incarnate a hegemony of power in favour of the teacher has been to reconceive of education as the place where questions are asked rather than answers provided. Representative of this position is the Jewish educationalist, Alan Block, who displays a love for this questions-without-answers approach. “My students, I remember, have been taught to demand answers,” he laments, and proposes rather: “The truth would never set us free, but perhaps, the pursuit of truth might approximate the exercise of a freedom great philosophers have only described.”¹⁹ Answers are cheap, he believes, whereas questions are costly; answers are easily given, whereas the proposing of questions is challenging. Mutuality is achieved by reducing the educational process to that of a common pursuit with no possibility of conclusion.

This last position is clearly an unworkable understanding of education. The notion of “questions but no answers” conceals the necessary interdependence that actually exists between two. John Paul’s observations in *Fides et ratio* are surely correct: he asks for a “primacy of philosophical enquiry,”²⁰ and argues that in fact

¹⁷ Jn 3:31; cf. 1 Thess 2:13. Thus: “We do not think up faith on our own. It does not come *from* us as an idea of ours but *to* us as a word from outside.” Joseph Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism*, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 30.

¹⁸ See, for example, *CT*, 21–22; *GDC*, 67; *CCC*, 5.

¹⁹ Alan A. Block, *Pedagogy, Religion and Practice: Reflections on Ethics and Teaching* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), 87.

²⁰ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio* (hereafter *FR*), 4.

questioning gradually ceases once it is acknowledged that no answers can be forthcoming. It is the depth of the possible *answers* that determines the depth of the questions that can be put to Being.²¹ Faced with the silence of Being we, like Hume, must turn to billiards or, with Wittgenstein, take up gardening, since “nobody aims at what he thinks he cannot attain.”²² The silencing of the answer is also the silencing of the question. The so-called “pursuit of truth” becomes the pursuit of the necessarily always-elusive. An education proposing an interest in questions with no answers very quickly ceases to be an education with any interest in significant questions.²³ Thus, one cannot maintain the dignity of those involved in catechesis merely by removing “answers” from the transmission of the Faith. Mary’s questions to Gabriel received responses.

Developing a Marian response

How might one begin to respond to the earlier points from a Marian perspective? It must be accepted, of course, that if Mary is seen as the one who is the focus for our understanding precisely because she has been incomparably *taught* then catechesis necessarily involves the role of a *teacher*. However, we should immediately note the strangeness of the accolade being awarded to Mary, from the point of view of critical theory. *Being taught* has become unaccountably a position of the highest dignity and merit. As we shall see, the Tradition considers God himself as the primary Teacher, and this fact is certainly part of the explanation; nonetheless, for now we should also note that this Teacher shares his role with others—originally the apostles and then all those authorised to teach with their authority. Within the Church’s understanding of the original pedagogy of God there is clearly a teaching role for the catechist. At the archetypal moment of the annunciation, when the Word was fully transmitted in history, this didactic role was served by the angel “sent from God.”²⁴ There can be no doubt, then, that direct teaching plays a central part in catechesis. As Kevane has convincingly argued, no one can read the great catecheses of the fourth century by Augustine, Ambrose, Cyril of Jerusalem

²¹ Where subjectivism and relativism about questions of truth are dominant, so that “the hope that philosophy might be able to provide definitive answers,” John Paul argues that “people rest content with partial and provisional truths, no longer seeking to ask radical questions about the meaning and ultimate foundation of human, personal and social existence” (FR, 5).

²² Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1378b4.

²³ This argument has been made, wittily and at length, by Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books), 1988.

²⁴ Lk 1:26.

and John Chrysostom and think anything other than that the style was essentially a didactic one. These bishops *taught* their catechumens.²⁵

At the same time, the figure of Mary in fact helps us to come to an appropriate appreciation for the place of *dialogue* in the process of the transmission of the faith. Alongside the didactic mode there is surely also a place for the dialogical. Luke's narrative of the annunciation seems, in fact, to accord a prominent place to dialogue. Magisterial documents on catechesis, also, speak of God's "dialogue of salvation"²⁶ being at the very heart of catechesis, so that the "wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person becomes its inspiration and norm."²⁷ And again: a catechesis inspired by the pedagogy of God "makes its own the process of dialogue."²⁸ God reveals to man the plan he is to accomplish and calls for a response in faith to that Revelation.²⁹

Within critical theory dialogue is typically seen as a more suitable and more "democratic" mode of education, enabling a range of views to be heard and considered within a relationship of mutual give and take; it seems to be respectful of the learner, speaking "with" rather than "to" the person, allowing the "other" into the teaching which is taking place. Indeed, in most teaching and learning models, dialogue is held to be of value, as an aid to developing the learner's potential, while encouraging the development of critical and intellectual skills through a mutual and shared engagement with questions. Champions of dialogue in teaching, such as Buber and Gadamer, also emphasise the value of dialogue as offering a learning and teaching context which is valuable, not only as a means of gaining greater knowledge and understanding, but also for the relational benefits it provides.

Still, it is generally accepted that these relational benefits do not appear automatically with the adoption of dialogue in teaching. Elizabeth Ellsworth sensibly notes that the value of dialogue in relation to personal values such as mutuality depends upon the teacher-learner relationship in the first place. Dialogue cannot achieve such a mutuality but rather *reflects* the character of the existing relationship.³⁰ There needs to be, in other words, an *already existing commitment* to an equality

²⁵ Eugene Kevane, *Catechesis in Augustine* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1989), 25–34.

²⁶ *GDC*, 143.

²⁷ *GDC*, 144.

²⁸ *GDC*, 143.

²⁹ This is the pattern of the prophetic call in the Old Testament. See, for example, the pattern of prophetic call-and-response for Abram (Gen 15:1–6), Moses (Ex 3:1–14), and Samuel (1 Sam 3:1–19). Sofia Cavalletti therefore rightly emphasises that there is a call here to "be attentive to the dialogue that is concretized in the covenant." *History's Golden Thread: The History of Salvation* (Chicago: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 1999), 1.

³⁰ See Elizabeth Ellsworth, *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy and the Power of Address* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997), 15–16. Dialogue is a "mode of address" that places

between catechist and learner for dialogue to take on this character. The adoption of dialogue as a mode of transmission will not, by itself, achieve a state of mutuality.³¹

Dialogue, though, is clearly an important dimension in the transmission of the faith, although it needs to be properly understood. Among the several forms³² that dialogue in teaching and learning can take, it is not to be thought of, for example, that the Faith could be “constructed” through dialogue. That would be to conflate the concept of teaching and learning by dialogue with something quite different: a theology of on-going Revelation. Dialogue can never become a tool for the revision of the doctrine of the Faith.³³ Dialogue in catechesis is unsuitable, therefore, for deriving definitions of the Faith, for discovering the content of the Faith, or for elaborating or seeking to develop the content of the Faith.³⁴

Moreover, we should notice at this point that in the annunciation narrative *it is God's dialogue with Mary* that is served by the angelic-human dialogue. It is the *Divine-human dialogue* of salvation which catechesis serves. Any dialogue style between catechist and learners serves this more fundamental dialogue. This entails the catechist knowing when to stand back from direct dialogue with the learner so that the freedom of the learner and the freedom of God can meet. The catechist “leaves” the learner at the conclusion of the dialogue: freedom is the hallmark of true catechesis.

teacher and learner in a particular relationship, depending upon the actual circumstances of their lives. Burbules makes a similar point, drawing attention to possible difficulties in the relationship between teachers and learners which a pedagogy of dialogue can conceal. See Nicholas C. Burbules, “The Limits of Dialogue and a Critical Pedagogy,” in *Revolutionary Pedagogies: Cultural Politics, Education, and Discourse of Theory*, Peter Trifonas, ed. (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000), 251–273.

³¹ Something like John Paul II's advocacy of friendship as the most fitting and appropriate context for learning is needed in order to allow the positive advantages of dialogue to truly flourish. See *FR*, 31–33 for his comments on the social environment needed for learning, for the development of a pedagogy of trust in a community of learners, and for the value of friendship in learning.

³² For example, Burbules, in a study of dialogue in teaching, distinguished between four major “types,” each with varying styles and aims: conversation, enquiry, instruction and debate. *Dialogue in Teaching: Theory and Practice* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

³³ One's point of guidance here remains the teaching of Vatican I in *Dei Filius*, Ch.4: “For the teaching of faith, which God has revealed, has not been proposed as a philosophical discovery to be perfected by human ingenuity, but as a divine deposit handed over to the Spouse of Christ to be guarded faithfully and to be explained infallibly. Hence the meaning of sacred dogmas must perpetually be retained which Holy Mother Church has once declared.” Translated by J.F.Broderick, S.J., *Documents of Vatican Council I* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1971), 48. Cf. *DS* 3020.

³⁴ In this respect its role in catechesis is to be distinguished from that found in the classic Socratic method, where dialogue is often used as a means of uncovering definitions through shared enquiry into a subject.

We will need to return to this point, but it is already apparent that, with regard to the question of mutuality and equality, we can say that, if the catechist were to fall into a position of transcendent hubris his perspective would clearly be a false one because not recognising the primacy of God's position as Teacher. Precisely because it would be a false perspective, it would also be harmful to the catechist, and therefore offend against the catechist's own dignity. In fact, though, it is impossible to sustain a view of others as mere objects, and not implicate oneself—unless one were to embrace a fully-fledged Gnostic separation of the human spirit from the world—for, “If He is absent from the Universe, He is absent from yourselves, and you can have nothing to tell about Him or the powers that come from Him.”³⁵

But in any case, for a catechist to understand himself as an agent transmitting a transcendent Deposit of Faith, or representing a transcendent Teacher, does not in fact imply that one is placed in a false position. It simply need not involve hubris, but is rather a matter for humility. The involvement of the catechist in the teaching of divine Truth must first of all be understood to be simply an *affirmation of the dignity of the human person*. Considered in the broadest sense, this is a uniting of human with divine agency, a uniting that follows the dogmatic principle enunciated by Karl Stern who wrote of “the unutterable mystery of the ‘and’”: thus the Catholic faith speaks of God *and* his creatures, of God's plan *and* of man's free will, of man *and* woman, of Christ *and* the Church, and so on³⁶—and in the case of the “original pedagogy” of the faith it involves the uniting of God's action with the activity of the human person. God, as First Cause, is the First Teacher; and he uses human persons as secondary instruments, to teach on his behalf. God grants to his creatures “the dignity of acting on their own, of being causes and principles for each other.”³⁷ “The condition of man would be lowered if God had not wished to have man supply His word to men.”³⁸ So the catechist's dignity is not threatened.

But what about the dignity of the learner? Is the learner being placed in the unenviable position of an inferior partner in the educational process through being taught? Not necessarily. Even *if* we were to accept a simple view that saw the catechist as the provider of knowledge and understanding to one who lacks these, it is

³⁵ So Plotinus, *Enneads*, Stephen MacKenna, trans. (London: Faber and Faber 1969), II.9.16.

³⁶ Karl Stern, *The Flight From Woman* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1965), 273.

³⁷ See CCC, 306–308. For illustrations of this general principle in different aspects of the Christian life see, for instance: CCC, 1071 (liturgy); CCC, 1695 (the moral life); CCC, 2564 (prayer). For this principle in general applied to catechesis see also Pierre De Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008), 22–23.

³⁸ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Durant W. Robertson, Jr., trans. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1958), *Prolog.* 6.

not necessarily the case that the giver in such a relationship be seen as the superior figure. After all, gifts are normally given as a part of a relationship in which the *receiver* of the gift is understood to be the greater. Far from demonstrating the superiority of the catechist, if we are to think of a superior and an inferior, this picture of catechesis as transmission would reverse this way of thinking.

But such a model of giver and receiver is in any case inadequate for an understanding of teaching. When one teaches one does not lose what is taught. Augustine succinctly expresses the difference between the material and spiritual dimensions of life: "Everything which does not decrease on being given away is not properly owned when it is owned and not given."³⁹ The catechist-learner relationship does not imply a "giving away," so much as a sharing and imparting of what is present to the mind of the catechist and which is not thereby lost to the catechist on being shared. In fact the reverse is true, that teaching supports learning: the handing on of what one knows is also a consolidation of that knowledge. Augustine thus reassures the teacher: "it is not to be feared that He will cease giving me more when I have begun to use what he has already given me."⁴⁰ Knowledge and understanding are not private possessions, such that where one mind holds an idea it must do so exclusively. Individual minds do not exist in isolation from one another: each belongs to a common world, which is the condition of knowledge of that world.

Indeed, full ownership in the realm of the spiritual consists in a handing on of that which is known; it consists in transmission. Truth is allied to love in this respect: there is an impetus towards communion within it. This is why teaching, says Augustine, provides an occasion for charity.⁴¹ The mind's happiness lies in contemplating the entire order of the world, the community of all things. In the spiritual sphere of mind, it is the common world shared by all minds which is sought: *transmission is an enabling of communion.*

The truth that God is the principal Agent, in any case, places a clear boundary on possible human hubris. It is a common classical position that the idea of an action exists in the mind of the person who would accomplish it before the action itself is realised. In other words, our effects, before existing in themselves as effects, exist in us as causes.⁴² And we are causes, are agents, only derivatively, for God is the First Cause. All things are his effects, and all things exist first in him as

³⁹ *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, I, 1.

⁴⁰ *De Doctrina Christiana*, *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *De Doctrina Christiana*, Prol.6.

⁴² Cf. Plato, *Philebus* 27a.

Cause before they exist in themselves as effects. I am a secondary agent.⁴³ No human being can elevate himself into a position of absolute agency because he, too, is an effect, owing his being to God.⁴⁴

Moreover, the concern that any presumption to speak on behalf of a “universal perspective” is to be thought of as a possible threat to those one is teaching, as though one would then be forgetful of particular beings, is misplaced. The opposite is the case: the very universality of the message and the mission which the catechist presents, is actually a safeguard for all participants, grounding the mutual worth of all in the catechetical process. The message is for all, and that means that it is for the one who is *teaching* as well as for those being taught: there is no distinction.⁴⁵ The catechist never ceases to be also a learner in the school of faith: he is both teacher and learner.

Let us examine further how this sharing in God’s teaching takes place, because by doing so we shall see that not only is the dignity of the one catechising affirmed, but that the dignity of the one learning is also guarded. Augustine and Aquinas are two significant representatives of the central Christian tradition on learning, providing accounts of how learning takes place which draw especially from the Platonic and Aristotelian perspectives respectively. While their positions are not identical, they share certain important points in common. Most importantly they share the view that God is *the* Teacher, but that this understanding does not rule out a secondary human agency in teaching. Aquinas’s views in this area can be traced from an early position, in *II Sentences* 9 and 28, in which his understanding remains close to that of Augustine, to that held in *Questiones disputatae de veritate* 11 and then finally in the *Summa Theologica* 1a q.117, where he is strongly influenced by Aristotle’s understanding of potency and act and interior and exterior causality.⁴⁶ Essentially, however, for both Augustine and Aquinas, the educational process is seen as depending principally upon the engagement of the learner. The human teacher is important, but *always in a supporting*, rather than in the lead role. One way of describing this relationship between learner and teacher, which we find in Augustine and in the early Aquinas, is that for understanding one needs two things. The first is a clear presentation, so that an object might be made intelligible to the learner. This

⁴³ For a striking meditation on this fact of secondary agency, see Thomas Traherne, *Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), I, 38.

⁴⁴ Cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 61.

⁴⁵ As Aquinas notes, all human minds are of the same intrinsic value: “all human intellects are of one grade in the natural order” (*STb* I q.117 a. 1).

⁴⁶ For an analysis of the progression in Aquinas’s thinking on teaching and learning, see Vivian Boland, O.P., *St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Continuum, 2007), 41–58, and for a detailed comparison of Aquinas and Augustine see Joseph M. Colleran, *The Treatises “De Magistro” of Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas* (New York: The Paulist Press, 1945).

might be a fairly simple matter in the case of things which are immediately intelligible so that they just need to be put before a person without explanation. Or it might be a more complex matter in the case of objects difficult to “see,” in which case the learner will need to be “led” to see it, moving by way of things already understood. The role of the teacher here is to present an object for understanding, or to guide a learner so that the learner can move towards this understanding. The teacher assists the learner in this way towards the truth by providing signs, usually in the form of words, that point to the truth that needs to be seen. The second thing needed for understanding is an interior light by which we understand. The teacher cannot provide this. The teacher, providing signs, is as it were using his finger to point to something. But the learner has actually to see that to which the finger points. No one can see for him. Thus, for instance, if a teacher were to say to me, “The tree sheds its leaves in autumn,” I know what this sentence means if and only if I know the realities to which these words refer: the words of the teacher are like signs, prompting me to look within myself, either by presenting images or pointing me to past images (i.e. memories). I do not learn directly from the teacher; he is the one who prompts me to learn from reality. We can certainly *believe* the teacher on the basis of the signs he gives to us. But *knowledge* is different—this requires contact with the real, and the opening of the understanding.

For Augustine, it is God alone who supplies the light for this understanding: he “illuminates” the mind so that it can see. He is the one who opens the mind to see and to understand. Aquinas, especially in his later work, places more emphasis on the potential of the learner with regard to this gaining of understanding. He uses an analogy with the human body and its need for healing. The body has within itself the potential for healing, although it sometimes needs assistance in the form of medicine. So the mind has the potential for understanding, although it, too, sometimes needs assistance from the teacher. In both cases, however, it is a matter of the doctor or teacher *assisting* the patient or learner. The doctor’s medicine helps nature to heal the body. The teacher helps the learner’s mind to reach and discover the truth. God is still the principal teacher, for it is he who has placed the power to understand within us, just as he is the Creator and Sustainer of nature.⁴⁷

In matters of faith, of course, we move to a new dimension of teaching and learning. Here we are not only speaking of God as the one who supplies the light of the intellect. God provides the *light of grace*, the prophetic light, whereby a person can assent with the will to what is proposed by the catechist. God affects us interi-

⁴⁷ Aquinas argues in the *Summa*, “As stated above, the teacher only brings exterior help, as the physician who heals: but just as the interior nature is the principal cause of the healing, so the interior light of the intellect is the principal cause of knowledge. But both of these are from God.” (*STb.* I, q.117, a.2, ad.1)

only, enabling us to respond in faith to that which is presented. Here Aquinas speaks of the Holy Spirit as the one who enables us to discover heavenly Wisdom by making us friends with God.⁴⁸ The gifts of the Holy Spirit are crucial for this movement towards God because they attune us to the action of God and allow us to be sensitive to his leading of us. St Thomas put it like this:

Now it is evident that whatever is moved must be proportionate to its mover: and the perfection of the mobile as such, consists in a disposition whereby it is disposed to be well moved by its mover. Hence the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the mobile is made proportionate to its mover: thus we see that a disciple needs a more perfect disposition in order to receive a higher teaching from his master Consequently man needs yet higher perfections, whereby to be disposed to be moved by God.⁴⁹

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given in order to provide us with the disposition needed to be docile. Because the journey we are following takes us beyond our natural human resources we need the supernatural aids of God to assist us, and this assistance consists in making us teachable and responsive to God's action in us. St Thomas quotes Isaiah: "The Lord ... has opened my ear, and I do not resist."⁵⁰ What is called for from the learner is not so much activity as a *responsive disposition*, a willingness to be led.

Let us return now to the way in which a Marian-inspired view of catechesis can respond to catechetical views that are influenced by critical theory. Henry Giroux explains that any understanding of the educational process that is inspired by critical pedagogy "attempts to expand the capacities necessary for human agency."⁵¹ The focus lies on human agency understood in terms of *activity*. The crucial insight that Christianity can offer, especially in the person and example of Mary, is that *receptivity can itself be the highest form of agency*. We see the truth above all, of course, in the Person of Christ himself: salvation is made available principally through his *Passion*, through his capacity *to receive and to bear* all that belongs to the human condi-

⁴⁸ See the helpful exposition by Michael Sherwin, "Christ the Teacher in St Thomas's Commentary on the Gospel of John," in *Reading John with St. Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology*, Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering, eds. (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 173–193.

⁴⁹ *STh.* I-II q.68, a.1.

⁵⁰ Is 50:5.

⁵¹ Henry Giroux, "Democracy, Education, and the Politics of Critical Pedagogy," in *Critical Pedagogy: where are we now?* Peter McLaren and Joe L.Kincheloe, eds. (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 2.

tion, including the consequences of sin—which is why St Paul exhorts members of the Body of Christ to imitate the Master and “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.”⁵²

It is significant, then, that Mary stands at the foot of the Cross, identifying with Christ in the hour of his passion, and receiving from him *there* her motherhood of the members of his body in the representative form of the beloved disciple. The teaching of the Second Vatican Council carefully notes the close links in the transmission of the faith between Mary’s motherhood and the motherhood of the Church: “the Church indeed ... by receiving the word of God in faith becomes herself a mother. By preaching and Baptism she brings forth sons, who are conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of God, to a new and immortal life.”⁵³

Mary’s sharing in the passion, and in the work of saving receptivity, began at the annunciation. As we have seen, the narrative of the annunciation is accorded so central a place in catechesis since “For the first time in the plan of salvation and because his Spirit had prepared her, the Father found the dwelling-place where his Son and his Spirit could dwell among men.”⁵⁴

Remembering that the perfection of Revelation is essentially the fulfilment of *the capacity to receive the gift of God*, we have at the Incarnation the fulfilling of Revelation in history in the person of Mary, prepared and made ready for the reception of the divine Son This is why the historical moment of the Annunciation is the living source for understanding the heart of catechesis.⁵⁵

⁵² Gal 6:2. For a good treatment of receptivity as agency see Carol McMillan, *Woman, Reason and Nature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), and for an insightful treatment of the Passion of Christ as a bearing of reality see William H. Vanstone, *The Stature of Waiting* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981). This understanding requires an anthropology which gives due weight to the passions, and studies such as that by Pinckaers are important for providing a positive account of the passions in the light of rationalist and voluntarist tendencies that have been suspicious of the place of emotions in the moral life. See Servais Pinckaers, “Re-appropriating Aquinas’ Account of the Passions,” in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Catholic Moral Theology*, John Berkman and Craig S. Titus, eds. (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005). Within the notion of *passio* as receptivity, St. Thomas makes room not only for an affective passivity as a capacity for exchange, but also *passio* as receptivity of *being*, characterising both feeling and intelligence (see *STh.*, I, q.22, a.1–2). For a discussion of Aquinas’s understanding of the passions in Christ’s life, and in our own insofar as we are called to participate in Christ’s life, see also Craig S. Titus, “Passions in Christ: Spontaneity, Development and Virtue,” *The Thomist* 73.1 (2009), 53–87.

⁵³ LG, 64.

⁵⁴ CCC, 721.

⁵⁵ Petroc Willey, “The Pedagogue and the Teacher,” in *The Pedagogy of God: Its Centrality in Catechesis and Catechist Formation*, 44–45.

In Mary the “Mother of the living”⁵⁶ standing at the Cross, we see the beginning of the Church, “the school of the word of God” in which “the disciple, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit, grows like his Teacher.”⁵⁷ In the on-going drama of the reception of the Divine Word in the Church, the teacher is certainly dignified with a participation in a divinely-governed process, but there is no question of any position of hegemony. The teacher is at the service of the “Marian dimension” of the Church, learning this service ultimately from the Queen herself, the Mother of God and the model of receptive learning of the faith.

⁵⁶ *CCC*, 494, referencing *LG*, 56.

⁵⁷ *GDC*, 142.

Woman, Motherhood, the Family, and the Mother of All Peoples

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The quintessential role of woman and of motherhood in family and society is presently under extraordinary (some would say unprecedented) modes of cultural attack and contamination from much of contemporary western society—a global deconstruction of authentic feminine and maternal metaphysics which necessarily leads to pandemic moral and ethical defeats for the *ecclesia domestica*, the Church universal, and the very fiber of the global family we call human.

What can return us to the proper respect for woman’s sacred dignity and the cherishing, rather than the demeaning, of her sublime vocation within marriage, family, Church, and worldwide society? How could the public, and even solemn, recognition of woman, mother, and spiritual motherhood in its greatest human historical expression lead to both the proper restoration of the sublime feminine and maternal dignity and, at the same time, release a historic torrent of graces that could greatly assist the international human family towards a spiritual renaissance of fidelity to its Creator?

Let us begin with a brief examination of “first things” regarding woman and her ultimate vocation.

I. Woman and Mother: Intercessor of Life and Love for the Family

Who is woman, and what is at the heart of the vocation of motherhood?

Pope St. John Paul II captures both the nature and the vocation of woman when he writes that a woman is called to testify to the existence and the depth of the love “with which every human being—man and woman—is loved by God in Christ.”¹ The special mission of every woman is “to welcome and to care for the human person.”² Our time in particular “awaits the manifestation of that ‘genius’ which belongs to women, and which can ensure sensitivity for human beings in every circumstance.”³

¹ St. John Paul II, *Mulieres Dignitatem*, 29.

² St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, November 24, 1999.

³ St. John Paul II, *Mulieres Dignitatem*, 30.

Woman, in a particular way, is orientated to the concrete love and nurturing of persons.⁴ St. Edith Stein (Teresa Benedicta of the Cross) articulates the essential nature and vocation of woman: “woman naturally seeks to embrace that which is living, personal, and whole. To cherish, guard, protect, nourish and advance growth is her natural and maternal longing.”⁵ *A woman most fully embodies her feminine charism in her motherhood.* To be a “mother” means to “protect and safeguard true humanity and to bring it to full development.”⁶ In a Letter to the *Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women*, Blessed Teresa of Calcutta writes: “The special power of loving that belongs to a woman is seen most clearly when she becomes a mother. Motherhood is the gift of God to women.”⁷

A mother is a natural intercessor or “mediator” of life and love within the family, as one who intercedes or “acts as a means” of bringing greater unity between others.⁸ Is this not the essential and perennial task of a mother? A mother physically and morally intercedes between the Creator and her family in her unique role of bringing life to the world. After receiving the seed of life from the human father, the body of the mother gives form and nourishment to the developing embryo, and thus works intimately as a “co-creator” with the Creator to mediate the precious gift of human life to the family and to the world. The child is the transcendent gift that results from the extensive, all-encompassing, moral and physical intercession of the mother, coupled with the necessary contribution of the father. Mothers uniquely intercede, both physically and morally, to unite God and family through the gift of children.

A mother is not only the special *intercessor of life* for the family, but also a unique *intercessor of love* for the family. Through the particularly feminine gifts of receptivity, sensitivity, warmth, understanding, compassion, long suffering, intuition and personal insight, a mother becomes the principal means of unity between the father and the children, as well as between the children themselves. Interventions of communication and empathy, understanding and wisdom, forgiveness and reconciliation, sacrifice and love, are constant manifestations of maternal intercession between all other members of the family unit.

Authentic motherhood calls for at least three essential expressions of maternal intercession for her children. First, a mother suffers for her child. A mother’s suffering is not limited to the physical pain experienced during gestation and birth, but

⁴ St. Edith Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 45.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (St. Edith Stein), R. Guardini, “On the Education of Women,” *L'Osservatore Romano*, March 6, 1969, English Edition, 9.

⁷ Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, *Letter to Fourth World Conference on Women*, Beijing, 1995.

⁸ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, Q. 26, a. 1.

also the profound “suffering of the heart” experienced throughout her child’s life, as the mother compassionately shares in the trials and tragedies that constitute a part of the life of every child. Secondly, a mother nourishes her child. The proper nourishing of a child extends far beyond the physical realm. A mother not only provides food and nutrition to her offspring from the moment of conception through gestation and birth, but far beyond this throughout the years of childhood and adolescence—offering the child the fundamental emotional, psychological, educational, and spiritual formation in the greatest and most complete manner of personal development possible. Thirdly, a mother “pleads” or intercedes for the well-being of her child. These maternal acts of advocacy first begin within the home, and then extend out into society as the child gradually enters the larger world. They are manifested in a variety of ways throughout the life of the child, which include interceding for the best needs of the child at school, in social settings, in the areas of music, sports, and other cultural activities. A mother’s advocacy for her child often includes aspects of protection and defense as the process of entrance into society can typically entail dangers and difficulties.

All these are expressions of the loving and sacrificial intercession of a mother. Is it any wonder that motherhood may be the most universally cherished vocation in the natural order, and that many a child, regardless of age, have ended their earthly life with the word, “mother” on their lips? It is for these reasons and more that the papal documents have referred to the mother as the “heart” of the family, and as such “she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.”⁹

II. Mary, Mother of the Holy Family

It is a wonderment of nature that “a creature should give birth to her Creator.”¹⁰ This liturgical antiphon reflects the mystery of Mary, who through her free consent to the sublime vocation of motherhood interceded in life and in love in order to bring forth the most exalted child, and thus most exalted family, in human history.

As is the case with every mother, Mary plays an irreplaceable role by consenting to bring life into what will become her family. Conceived “full of grace” through the foreseen merits of the future Redeemer and the sanctifying indwelling of the Holy Spirit,¹¹ the young virgin of Nazareth is providentially made ready to become the most important mother of the human race. Still, Mary’s “let it be done” constituted an entirely free, active, and feminine “yes” to the heavenly Father’s

⁹ Cf. for example, Pius XI, *Casti Connubii*, December 31, 1930, 27.

¹⁰ Cf. Liturgical Antiphon, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

¹¹ Bl. Pius IX, *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854; *Lumen Gentium* 56.

mission of motherhood: “Be it done to me according to your word”(Lk. 1:38).¹² With this free cooperation to the plan of God “as mother,” Mary brings the world its Redeemer and merits the title above all her other titles, “Mother of God,”¹³ which contains within it the essence and vocation of her supreme motherhood.

As well as consenting to become a motherly intercessor of life in giving birth to Jesus, Mary also performs her duty as an intercessor of love within the Holy Family. It is Mary that will intercede between Joseph, her chaste virginal husband, and Jesus, her child, within the natural familial flow of love between father and child. Mary will mediate in the fulfilling of the usual motherly acts as *heart of the Holy Family*. We see this, for example, at the finding of Jesus at the temple when, after three days of parental suffering and searching (cf. Lk. 2:46-51), it is Mary who intercedes by speaking to the young Jesus on behalf of herself and Joseph: “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously” (Lk 2:48).

Mary also fulfilled the innumerable acts of small, intercessory tasks in fidelity to her vocation as mother. Pope Francis describes here:

How did Mary live this faith? She lived it out in the simplicity of the thousand daily tasks and worries of every mother, such as providing food, clothing, caring for the house It was precisely Our Lady’s normal life which served as the basis for the unique relationship and profound dialogue which unfolded between her and God, between her and her Son.¹⁴

III. Our Lady, Spiritual Mother in the Family of God

In ways both sublime and ordinary, Mary fulfills her providential role as the motherly intercessor of life and love within the extraordinary designs of the Holy Family. Yet her motherhood within the Holy Family would extend, due to the universal redemptive mission of her Son, to include the entirety of God’s Family, and indeed to all peoples. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis refers to Mary’s motherhood both domestically and universally as a “mother of all”:

Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the

¹² *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

¹³ Council of Ephesus, 431.

¹⁴ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, October 23, 2013.

woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain. As mother of all, she is a sign of hope for peoples suffering the birth pangs of justice. She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life, opening our hearts to faith by her maternal love. As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love (EG 286).

It is sometimes perceived that the traditional titles attributed to Mary's motherly intercession came solely as a result of speculative theology, rather than being founded in the Word of God.¹⁵ But in fact, the titles of maternal intercession used by the papal magisterium have their solid basis in both Scripture and apostolic Tradition, as properly interpreted by the Church's magisterium. *Dei Verbum* reminds us that Tradition makes progress in the Church through a legitimate development of doctrine under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶ Let us therefore examine a synthesized New Testament chronology of the gradual revelation of the Mother of Jesus from the Annunciation just discussed, until the establishment of Mary by the crucified Jesus as "mother of us all,"¹⁷ and the legitimate Marian titles and roles that organically develop and come to light from their doctrinal seeds found in Scripture and apostolic Tradition. For Mary's consent to the mission of redemption at the Annunciation will remain unbroken, up to and including her historic participation in the sacrifice of Jesus at Calvary.¹⁸

The mother who gave physical birth to Jesus, also gave spiritual birth to his Body, the Church. Jesus Christ is the "head of the body, the Church" (Col 1:18). Therefore at the Annunciation, Mary's fiat led not only to the physical conception of Jesus, Head of the body, but also to the *spiritual conception of his mystical body*, to which belong all the followers of Christ, and through the Church, all believers. St. Augustine tells us: "She is really Mother of the members who we are, because she cooperated by charity so that there might be born in the Church believers, of whom he is the Head."¹⁹ St. John Paul II further explains: "Since she gave birth to Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body, she also had to have given birth to all the members of that one Body. Therefore, 'Mary embraces each and every one in the Church, and embraces each and every one *through* the Church'."²⁰

¹⁵ For example, titles already used by the papal magisterium for Our Lady's intercession, including "Queen," "Mediatrice of all graces," "Co-redemptrix," and "Reparatrix."

¹⁶ Cf. *Dei Verbum*, 9, 10.

¹⁷ Pope Francis, "Prayer of Entrustment to Mary," October 13, 2013.

¹⁸ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 58.

¹⁹ St. Augustine, *De Sancta Virginitate*, 6, 6; cf. St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Ilium*, 1904.

²⁰ St. John Paul II, *Allocution at Fatima*, May 12, 1991; *Redemptoris Mater*, 47.

Within the profound mystery of the Word becoming flesh through her divine motherhood, Mary gave to Jesus the human “instrument” of redemption, which is his body, for “we have been sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all” (Heb 10:10). The Immaculate Virgin uniquely cooperated in the mystery of Redemption, not only by giving birth to the Redeemer and providing him with the bodily instrument of the redemption, but also in virtue of her unparalleled suffering with her Son throughout the entire mission of redemption.²¹ Insofar as Mary, as Mother of God, gave birth to the “Redeemer of man,”²² she is already legitimately referred to as the human “Co-redemptrix” (“the woman with the Redeemer”), as her consent gave the Redeemer his body and consequently his human nature through which he redeems the world—a contribution to the work of redemption unparalleled by any other creature.²³

Through her historic intercession at the Annunciation, Mary also mediates the “one Mediator” (cf. 1 Tim 2:5) into human history. She acts as a human “mediatrix,”²⁴ as she uniquely intercedes as a mother to bring Jesus Christ into the human race. Mary’s intercessory role as mother does not obscure or compete with the one mediation of Jesus Christ upon which Mary’s secondary mediation is entirely subordinate and dependent,²⁵ but her maternal cooperation with God’s plan of the Incarnation is precisely what made the redeeming mission of the one Mediator possible. Once again, it is *Mary, the Mediatrix who mediated the one Mediator to us*. Moreover, since Jesus is the source and author of all graces, Mary, in virtue of this first great act of motherly intercession, is already properly invoked in the Church and by at least ten modern popes as the *Mediatrix of all graces*.²⁶

The Fathers of the Church captured the doctrine of Spiritual Maternity in the patristic concept of the “New Eve.” As the first Eve or “Mother of the Living”²⁷ was instrumental with the first Adam in the loss of grace for the human family, so too Mary as the “New Eve” or “New Mother of the Living” was instrumental with Jesus, the “New Adam,”²⁸ in the restoration of grace for the humanity.²⁹ Within the

²¹ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 58.

²² Cf. St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1.

²³ Cf. Heb 10:10, which speaks of “the offering of the *body* of Jesus Christ once for all.”

²⁴ *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

²⁵ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 60, 61.

²⁶ Cf. For example of most recent usage by a pope, cf. Pope Benedict XVI, use of “*Mediatrix omnium gratiarum*,” *Letter for World Day of the Sick at the Shrine of Our Lady of Altötting, Germany*, Feb. 11, 2013. For documentation of the popes of the last three centuries, cf. A. Apollonio, F.I., “Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces” in *Mariology: A Guide For Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons*, 444–464.

²⁷ Genesis 3:20.

²⁸ Cf. 1 Cor 15:22, 45; Rom 5:12, 21.

New Eve model, the Fathers captured the truth of Mary's spiritual maternity in a simple though essential formulation, which include dimensions of spiritual motherhood, mediation, and coredemption. Early Church testimony to her intercession is exemplified in St. Irenaeus's second century teaching that Mary is the "cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race;"³⁰ as well as in the famous maxim of St. Jerome: "Death through Eve, Life through Mary."³¹

When Mary visits Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-56), she is the pregnant mother who physically "mediates" the unborn Christ into the presence of Elizabeth and the unborn Baptist—a physical intercession which in turn leads to two events of grace: the pre-sanctification of John in the womb and the prophesying of Elizabeth by the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1:41-42). At the Presentation of the infant Jesus (Lk 2:21-38), Simeon identifies Jesus as the "sign of contradiction," but also testifies to the core-demptive role of Mary—the woman who will suffer with the Redeemer: "and a sword shall pierce through your own heart, too" (Lk 2:35) so that the "secret thoughts" of the redemption may laid bare.

The Wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1-10) dynamically reveals the role of the motherly Mediatrix as Mary knowingly and willingly intercedes for the grace of the first public miracle. As St. John Paul II comments of the Cana event: "She acts as a mediatrix, not as an outsider, but in her position as mother."³² The Cana event further discloses Mary's motherly role as "Advocate," as one who speaks on behalf of humanity before the throne of her Son, Christ the King. At the wedding feast, Mary advocates for the newly married couple in what constitutes an unequivocal biblical example of Marian intercession. The fact that the wedding couple is not known to be disciples of Jesus indicates the universality of her role as humanity's advocate—that her maternal intercession reaches beyond the limits of Christianity, and extends to the universal needs of all mankind.³³

It is only at Calvary, at the summit of the historic event of redemption, that Mary's Spiritual motherhood is fully established and declared. Pope Francis expounds:

On the cross, when Jesus endured in his own flesh the dramatic encounter of the sin of the world and God's mercy, he could feel at his feet the consoling presence of his mother and his friend. At that crucial moment, before fully accomplishing the work which his Father had entrusted to him, Jesus said to Mary:

²⁹ Cf. St. Irenaeus, *Ad Haer III*, 22, 4, PG 7, 959; LG 56.

³⁰ St. Irenaeus, *Ad Haer III*, 22, 4, PG 7, 959.

³¹ St. Jerome, *Epist.* 22, 21; PL 22, 408. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 56.

³² St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 21.

³³ Cf. St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 21.

“Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to his beloved friend: “Here is your mother” (Jn 19:26-27). These words of the dying Jesus are not chiefly the expression of his devotion and concern for his mother; rather, they are a revelatory formula which manifests the mystery of a special saving mission. Jesus left us his mother to be our mother. Only after doing so did Jesus know that “all was now finished” (Jn 19:28). At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel (EG 285).

In union with the Redeemer at Golgotha, it is the Mother who uniquely shares in the work of redemption by “sharing the intensity of his suffering” in her mother’s heart. As *Lumen Gentium* expounds:

Thus the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifices in her mother’s heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim born of her (LG 58).

Once again, the single term from the Church’s tradition that best encapsulates Mary’s role as Spiritual Mother within the work of redemption is the title, “Co-redemptrix.” The Marian title of Co-redemptrix, which was explicitly used six times by St. John Paul II, three times by Pius XI, and three times by Vatican congregations under the pontificate of St. Pius X,³⁴ never places Mary on a level of equality with Jesus Christ, the only divine Redeemer of humanity. It refers, rather, to the unique cooperation of this woman and mother “with Jesus” in the redemptive mission—the dimension of her spiritual maternity in the order of suffering.

At Golgotha, Mary is, in words of St. John Paul II, “spiritually crucified with her crucified son.”³⁵ Yet, as the *Totus Tuus* Pope continues, “her roles as Co-redemptrix did not cease with the glorification of her son.”³⁶ In virtue of her unparalleled role in the *obtaining* of the graces of redemption with Jesus, she is conse-

³⁴ For the pontificate of St. Pius X: Congregation of Rites, AAS, 1, 1908, Holy Office, 409; AAS 5, 1913, 364; Holy Office, AAS, 6, 1914, 108. For Pius XI: L.R., 1; *Audience*, Dec. 1, 1933, L.R., 1; *Audience*, March 25, 1934, L.R., 1; *Audience*, April 29, 1935. For St. John Paul II: *Audience*, Sept. 8, 1982; *Audience*, Nov. 4, 1984, L.R., 1; *Audience*, March 11, 1985, L.R., 7; *Homily*, Jan. 31, 1985; *Audience*, April 9, 1985, L.R., 12; *Audience*, March 24, 1990.

³⁵ St. John Paul II, *Homily at Guayaquil, Ecuador*, Jan. 31, 1985.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

quently proclaimed by the crucified Jesus as the spiritual Mother of all peoples, whose task it is now to *dispense* the graces of redemption as the Mediatrix of all graces.”³⁷

Mary’s spiritual maternity actively continues in the distribution of the graces of redemption, precisely as the Mediatrix of all graces and as Advocate for humanity. Mary’s role as the Mediatrix of all graces has been officially taught by most every pope of the last three centuries, from Benedict XIV in the 18th century to Pope Benedict XVI.³⁸ Her mediation of grace is, again, an outward expression and practice of her spiritual maternity, as St. John Paul II explicates this key point: “Recognition of her role as mediatrix is moreover implicit in the expression, ‘our Mother,’ which presents the doctrine of Marian mediation by putting the accent on her motherhood.”³⁹ The expression “our Mother,” contains within itself the truth and the role of Mary as Mediatrix of all graces obtained at Calvary.

In the days before Pentecost (Cf. Acts 1:14), Mary is there, interceding as a motherly advocate on behalf of the infant church for the Holy Spirit to descend. In the same way, for a New Evangelization to be fully effective, the Church must again utilize Mary as the human Advocate, to implore the Holy Spirit, the divine Advocate, *to descend in our time* in order to guide and sanctify our efforts to spread the Gospel of Jesus today. Pope Francis points out that Mary’s advocacy to the Spirit thus made possible the first evangelization: “With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present in the midst of the people. She joined the disciples in praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14) and thus made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost (EG 284).”

Moreover, Pope Francis describes how Mary’s ongoing Advocacy for her earthly children is witnessed throughout the world’s Marian shrines, inclusive of her most tender and maternal self-identification as Our Lady of Guadalupe:

Through her many titles, often linked to her shrines, Mary shares the history of each people which has received the Gospel and she becomes a part of their historic identity. Many Christian parents ask that their children be baptized in a Marian shrine, as a sign of their faith in her motherhood which brings forth new children for God. There, in these many shrines, we can see how Mary brings together her children who with great effort come as pilgrims to see her and to be seen by her. Here they find strength

³⁷ Cf. St. Pius X, *Ad Diem Illum*, 1904. *Lumen Gentium*, 57; *Lumen Gentium*, 62.

³⁸ For a listing of papal references of “Mediatrix of all graces” from Pope Benedict XIV to Pope Benedict XVI, cf. , A. Apollonio, “Mary, Mediatrix of all Graces” in *Mariology: A Guide For Priests, Deacons, Seminarians and Consecrated Persons*, 444-464.

³⁹ St. John Paul II, “Mary, Mediatrix,” *General Audience*, October 1, 1997.

from God to bear the weariness and the suffering in their lives. As she did with Juan Diego, Mary offers them maternal comfort and love, and whispers in their ear: “Let your heart not be troubled Am I not here, who am your Mother?” (EG 286).

Finally, the New Testament testimony to Spiritual Maternity exposes its spiritually protective character as the *Woman-Mother* in the Book of Revelation (Rev 12:17). Here the Woman “clothed with the sun” and ‘crowned with twelve stars’ courageously advocates for the Church, who makes up the “rest of her offspring” under attack by the Dragon. Again, Pope Francis confirms: “The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood. Mary, who brought him into the world with great faith, also accompanies ‘the rest of her offspring,’ those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus (Rev 12:17) (EG 285).”

Throughout the New Testament, therefore, the spiritual maternity of Mary is gradually unveiled and dynamically put into practice on behalf of God’s people. We see the same spiritual battle for souls revealed in the Book of Revelation—the cosmic confrontation between the Queen-Advocate and the Dragon-Adversary—raging in full intensity today. It is a battle for families, for society, and for the Church, and it presently calls for the strongest possible advocacy by the world’s Spiritual Mother.

IV. The Signs of Our Time and the World’s Mother

Gaudium et Spes reminds us that “at all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the time and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task” (GS, 4). What, then, constitute the contemporary signs of the times, and what are their ramifications for the domestic family, the family of the Church, and the entire human family?

On the domestic spectrum of human society, the family seems to be facing some of its most severe threats, particularly in the areas of marriage stability; sexual and bio-ethical morality; and proper care for women, children, and the elderly.⁴⁰ Even from the pope who perennially exhorted the Church to “be not afraid,” St.

⁴⁰ For example, abortion (presently approximated at 42 million annually); unprecedented divorce, contraception, abuse of women and children, human trafficking of women and minors; large scale loss of Christian faith, particularly among youth; a decrease in respect for the elderly, and an increase in euthanasia. For the soaring increase of Euthanasia, particularly in the Netherlands and Belgium, cf. www.lifesitenews.com, June 27, 2011, September 24, 2013; also for current statistics, cf. www.euthanasia.com.

John Paul II openly acknowledges his concern regarding the present state of family life:

A similar need for commitment and prayer arises in relation to another critical contemporary issue: *the family*, the primary cell of society, increasingly menaced by forces of disintegration on both the ideological and practical planes, so to make us fear for the future of this fundamental institution, and with it, the future of society as a whole.⁴¹

On the global front, the present nuclear capacity of several countries, along with its exponential power for the destructions of entire regions and even nations, stands as a most serious global challenge unique to our times. As Cardinal Ratzinger remarked: "Today the prospect that the world might be reduced to ashes by a sea of fire no longer seems pure fantasy: man himself, with his inventions, has forged the flaming sword."⁴²

Violent geo-political conflicts are ongoing in Palestine, Israel, Russia, the Ukraine, Crimea, Syria, Iraq, and Libya. World hunger is increasing, with one out of every seven persons going to bed hungry.⁴³ The false ideologies of "new atheism," western materialism, and secular humanism, are all on the rise. A dramatic increase of Christian persecution is taking worldwide particularly in Iraq, Syria, Sudan, and Nigeria. Singularly concerning is the newly assembled terrorist group "ISIS" (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) which is initiating extreme forms of Christian persecution (as well as to other ethnic minorities) in shocking forms which manifest its clearly diabolical origin.⁴⁴

What can the Church do in the midst of these seemingly unprecedented global attacks upon the family, society, and the Church herself?

Throughout its tradition and history, the Church as the Family of God has shown the wisdom to turn to Mary during its most dangerous and critical moments. In the early Church, Christians fled to the Mother of God for deliverance and protection during times of Christian persecution as seen in the ancient prayer, *Sub Tuum Praesidium*: "We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin."⁴⁵ At times of crisis during the late middle ages and early modern period, the Church again sought the powerful intercession of the Mother, as seen at

⁴¹ St. John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, 6.

⁴² Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Commentary on the Third Part of the Secret of Fatima*, June 26, 2000.

⁴³ *World Health Organization Statistics on Hunger and Starvation*, 2012.

⁴⁴ ISIS (or ISIL) forms of persecution include murder, sexual assault, crucifixion, beheading, and slavery—inclusive of women and children.

⁴⁵ *Sub Tuum Praesidium*, 3rd century.

the battle of Lepanto (1571) through “Our Lady of the Rosary,” and the Battle of Vienna through the “Holy Name of Mary”(1683). More recently, many have acknowledged the relatively bloodless fall of the Communism in Eastern Europe and connected it to the consecration of the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Pope St. John Paul II on March 25, 1984, in fulfillment of the request issued by Our Lady of Fatima.⁴⁶

Again, at the times of its greatest historical crises, *the Church turns to Mary*.

Is it not, once again *time now*, to follow the perennial wisdom of the Church and to definitively call upon the greatest possible intercession of the world’s Spiritual Mother?

V. The Solemn Definition of Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood

One hundred years ago, the renowned Belgian prelate, Desire-Joseph Cardinal Mercier, initiated a movement within the Church to support and petition for a solemn definition of Mary’s Spiritual Maternity.⁴⁷ The previous Marian definitions of *Mother of God* (431), *Threefold Virginity* (649), *Immaculate Conception* (1854), and *Assumption* (1950), have solemnly proclaimed Mary’s relationship with Jesus and her unique gifts of grace in soul and body. A fifth Marian definition would infallibly declare *Mary’s relationship with us, her children*—both within God’s family of the Church, and to the entire human family. From its outset, the motivation for this Marian dogma, beyond the appropriate recognition of the unparalleled role of the Mother of God as our Mother, was the firm conviction that this papal definition would bring with it *historic graces for the Church and for the world*.⁴⁸

Why would a dogma proclamation of Spiritual Maternity result in a new abundance of grace for humanity? For the pope to solemnly declare our Lady’s roles is to offer God the greatest possible human acknowledgement of the truth and acceptance of Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood on the part of humanity, and at the same time, to request in full freedom for the maximum possible actuation of her maternal roles of intercession. While it can be said that every previous Maria dogma has led to great graces for the Church, the papal definition of Spiritual Motherhood appears particularly disposed to such an outpouring of grace. The more we freely acknowledge the providentially designed roles of our Spiritual Mother, the more she is “*free*” and *welcomed by us* – in conformity with God’s respect for our free will—

⁴⁶ Cf. July 13, 1917 Message of Our Lady of Fatima.

⁴⁷ Initiation of the Movement for the Solemn Definition of Our Lady’s Spiritual Maternity by Cardinal Mercier in April, 1915, cf. M. Hauke, *Mary, Mediatress of Grace: Mary’s Mediation of Grace in the Theological and Pastoral Works of Cardinal Mercier*, Ch. I.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

to bring to full activation and power her roles of motherly intercession on our behalf. Blessed Teresa of Calcutta refers to this historic outpouring of grace as a result of this papal definition in her letter of petition for this fifth Marian dogma: “*The papal definition of Mary as Coredemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces and Advocate will bring great graces to the Church.*”⁴⁹

In sum, the solemn papal definition of Mary’s spiritual maternity will permit and utilize *the fullest possible exercise of Mary’s motherly functions of intercession for the world*. Since 1915, over eight hundred bishops⁵⁰ and over seven million faithful⁵¹ have petitioned the popes of the last hundred years for this dogmatic crown for Mary, as was the Catholic precedence for the last two Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.⁵² This should not be overlooked, especially in light of the legitimate consideration of the *sensus fidelium* in the examination of appropriate conditions for a dogmatic definition.⁵³

In light of the foregoing, what reasonable spiritual fruit could we expect from the definition of Spiritual Maternity as a dogma? The following benefits for the family, the Church, and the world benefits could certainly be foreseen:

1) A renewal of family life and the mother’s role in the family as its quintessential “heart.” A definition of Spiritual Motherhood cannot but redound into a new championing of the sublime role of the motherhood in every family. A new solemn recognition of motherhood in the person of Mary would immediately result in restoring the proper reverence for the role of mother as the heart of every family, which would further result in a domestic transfusion of love and grace into the domestic church.

2) A new respect for the dignity of the human person based on the radical respect that God placed on the free cooperation of one human person, Mary, to participate in the saving work of Christ. All human persons are raised in dignity

⁴⁹ *Petition Letter of Bl. Teresa of Calcutta for the Fifth Marian Dogma*, August 14, 1993, cf. www.fifthmariandogma.com.

⁵⁰ Cardinal Mercier submitted several hundreds of bishop petitions within the first few years of the movement from 1915 to 1920. The more recent *Vox Populi Marie Mediatrix* movement records 522 bishops and 57 cardinals from 1993 to 2010, cf. www.fifthmariandogma.com.

⁵¹ Over 7 million petitions from over 180 countries for this fifth Marian dogma have been submitted to the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, since 1995, cf. www.fifthmariandogma.com.

⁵² Both B. Pius IX and Pius XII thanked the Christian faithful for the outpouring of the petitions for these respective Marian dogmas as a legitimate manifestation of the *sensus fidelium*; cf. *Ineffabilis Deus*, Dec. 8, 1854 and *Munificentissimus Deus*, November 1, 1950.

⁵³ Cf. John H. Newman, *The Rambler*, 1859; Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman. A Biography*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988, 463-489.

through the victorious role given by God to one woman, which likewise effects the restoration of family life as a sacred communion of persons instituted by God.

3) A new celebration of women in the Church, and a concrete feminine model that properly encourages the Church to integrate women more profoundly into the work of the New Evangelization, as well as into the overall life of the Church. This new recognition of women should include legitimate leadership positions in the Church which do not require ordination, nor conflict with the primary responsibility of Christian motherhood, but rather make use of it for the fullest extent for all God's children. A definition of spiritual maternity would underscore that it was a woman who was predestined by God to accompany the one divine Redeemer and Mediator in his salvific work, and as such provide the authentic foundation for a true Christian feminism. *A proclamation of Mary is at the same time a proclamation of woman.* As Pope Francis underscored: "the Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood" (EG 285).

4) A supernatural infusion of grace into the New Evangelization by its Mother and "Star." As Christian history testifies at places like Guadalupe, when Mary leads the way in spreading the Gospel of Christ, whole regions or even continents can quickly be converted to or renewed in the Church. As Pope Francis reminds us: "She is the Mother of the Church which evangelizes, and without her we could never truly understand the spirit of the new evangelization" (EG 284).

In light of a new papal "fiat" to her titles and functions of intercession, Our Lady could profoundly fulfill the prayer of Pope Francis to "obtain a new ardor born of the resurrection, that we may bring to all the Gospel of life, which triumphs over death," and thereby grant the Church "a holy courage to seek new paths, that the gift of unfading beauty may reach every man and woman) (EG 288). It is because Mary, beyond all other creatures, gave herself "*completely to the Eternal One*" that she can best "help us to say our own 'yes' to the urgent call, as pressing as ever, to proclaim the good news of Jesus"(EG 288).

It is moreover essential to the process of the New Evangelization that we fully incorporate a "Marian style" to our methods of spreading the Gospel. Pope Francis expounds:

There is a Marian "style" to the Church's work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves (EG 288).

Mary is, moreover, our model of service and evangelization for the poor and marginalized, and the solemn highlighting of her motherly example will only aid the Church to better imitate its evangelizing exemplar: "She is the woman of prayer

and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town “with haste” (Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization” (EG 288). A definition of maternity would certainly highlight the Church’s imperative to become more maternal in its methods of spreading the Gospel.

Additionally, Pope Francis has offered a new ecclesiological model of the Church as “*home*” (cf. EG 288). If the Church is truly to become “home” for all peoples, we have all the more the imperative for the Mother of the Church to be more intimately involved— that the “heart” of the Family of God may utilize her unique maternal gifts in transforming the Church evermore into a community where new inquirers and new believers will authentically see and experience the *Church as home*.

5) The renewal and “marianization” of the Church through the solemn recognition of its perfect model and member. Pope Francis reminds us that “Mary is the woman of faith, who lives and advances in faith, and “her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church” (EG 287). The dogmatic crowning of the Mother would accentuate the sacred role of the Church as “mother” (LG 63, 64), in the mission of bringing supernatural life to souls. The declaration of Mary as Mother of all peoples would underscore the Church also as a “mother for all peoples,” which is incorporated into this prayer of Pope Francis to the Mother: “We implore her maternal intercession that the Church may become a home for many peoples, *a mother for all peoples*, and that the way may be opened to the birth of a new world (E.V 288).”⁵⁴

The proclamation of her role as Co-redemptrix as the foundational and inseparable suffering aspect of her spiritual maternity reminds the Church of its need to likewise be “co-redeemers in Christ,”⁵⁵ to use the expression of St. John Paul II, in making up “what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, which is the Church” (Col 1:24). Pope Benedict likewise called the Church to become “redeemers in the Redeemer.”⁵⁶

6) A new outpouring of grace for the world’s poor, suffering, hungry, elderly, and marginalized. The *Magnificat* reveals the special place in Our Lady’s heart for “the lowly” and the “hungry” (Lk 1:52, 53). This definition would bring generous graces to the world’s most needy peoples, the poor and those on the “fringes” of the human family, and as such hold a preferential place in the Immaculate Heart of

⁵⁴ Emphasis mine.

⁵⁵ Cf. for example, St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Jan 13, 1982.

⁵⁶ Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily during Eucharistic Benediction at Fatima*, May 12, 2011.

Mary: “Star of the new evangelization, help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth, illuminating even the fringes of our world” (EG 288).

7) A contribution to authentic Christian ecumenism. True motherhood unites rather than divides children. So too, does the sublime spiritual maternity of the perfect Mother among her Christian children. Despite advancements in Christian unity through prayer and dialogue, ecumenism is still in need of new and profound graces to reach its goal of full unity in Christ’s Body. A new surge of grace into our present ecumenical efforts could first *unite the hearts of her children*, which could then subsequently lead to a *new unity of minds* amidst the Christian family—an ecumenical breakthrough through the intercession of the *Mother of Christian unity*.⁵⁷

A definition of Spiritual Maternity would also articulate in the clearest possible biblical and theological terms that Catholic Christians do not “adore” Mary, but properly acknowledge her secondary and subordinate role with Jesus in salvation as “a mother in the order of grace.”⁵⁸ It would offer the ecumenical dialogue an invaluable tool as an accurate biblical and theological formulation of what the Church believes about Mary. Christian truth in itself unites.

8) Peace among nations. The Mother of all humanity is also the Queen of Peace, who seeks to bring the Prince of Peace to all lands, especially those most torn by war, hatred, and destruction. The definition would offer a new release of supernatural grace and wisdom towards the resolving of the most complex regional, national, and international geo-political conflicts, which at this point might appear beyond human or diplomatic remedy. Such is the special charism of the maternal “Undoer of Knots.”⁵⁹

Potential Objections to a Marian Definition

Some might object that a dogma of Spiritual Maternity would not be appropriate in light of the scriptural teachings of 1 Tim 2:5 that “there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Yet it must again be emphasized that Mary’s Spiritual Motherhood is only a subordinate sharing in the one mediation of Christ, as are the prayers and intercession of every Christian. *Lumen Gentium* reminds us:

But Mary’s function as mother of men in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its

⁵⁷ Cf. St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 21, 28.

⁵⁸ *Lumen Gentium*, 61.

⁵⁹ Cf. Pope Francis, *Allocution on the Eve of Consecration to Mary*, October 12, 2013.

power ... it flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on his mediation, depends entirely on it and draws all its power from it. It does not hinder in any way the immediate union of the faithful with Christ but on the contrary fosters it (*LG* 60).

Mary intercedes, the Church intercedes, the saint intercedes, the angel intercedes, the priest intercedes, the lay faithful intercedes, each in their diverse and proportionate degrees, yet all as secondary and subordinate participants in the one mediation of Jesus Christ.⁶⁰ Mary shares in the one mediation of Jesus like no other,⁶¹ due to her unique role with Jesus in the work of redemption, and in light of her unparalleled role in the distribution of grace to humanity. But her motherly mediation is neither “parallel” nor does it “compete” with the one mediation of Christ. St. John Paul II offers this exceptionally clear teaching on 1 Tim 2:5 and its authentic Catholic interpretation:

In proclaiming Christ the one mediator (cf. 1 Tim 2:5-6), the text of St. Paul’s letter to Timothy excludes any other parallel mediation, but not subordinate mediation. In fact, before emphasizing the one exclusive mediation of Christ, the author urges “that supplications, prayers, intercession, and thanksgivings be made for all men” (2:1). Are not prayers a form of mediation? By proclaiming the uniqueness of Christ’s mediation, the Apostle intends only to exclude any autonomous or rival mediation, and not other forms compatible the infinite value of the Savior’s work.⁶²

Just as the Pauline teaching that “all have fallen short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23) did not, despite first impressions, run contrary to the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, so too the Pauline teaching of 1 Tim 2:5 does not run contrary to the present doctrine and the potential definition of Mary as Spiritual Mother and Mediatrix of all graces.

Still others might contend this Marian definition would impede ecumenical progress with other Christian ecclesial bodies, and thereby run counter to the conciliar call for Christian unity. Authentic ecumenical activity within the Church identifies prayer as its soul and dialogue as its body in the true seeking of unity within the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ.⁶³ True ecumenical efforts,

⁶⁰ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, ST III, Q. 26, a. 1; *Lumen Gentium* 60-61.

⁶¹ Cf. St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 21, 39.

⁶² St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, October 1, 1997.

⁶³ Cf. St. John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 21, 28.

however, can neither compromise authentic doctrinal teachings which include those concerning the Mother of God, nor should they be an obstacle to legitimate doctrinal development,⁶⁴ and this proposed Marian dogma would, in fact, constitute a legitimate development of the perennial doctrine regarding Mary's Spiritual Maternity. Marian truth properly articulated does not put up walls, but rather builds bridges. All Christians need to know, with the same clarity of profession made by the Redeemer on Calvary, that they too have Mary as *their mother* (cf. Jn 19:26). Pope Francis has recently commented: "A Christian without the Virgin is an orphan."⁶⁵

Another potential objection is that the Marian titles which comprise the specific expressions and functions of Spiritual Maternity such as "Co-redemptrix" and "Mediatrix" should not be used in a potential definition since their etymological base is too close to those of the divine "Redeemer" and "Mediator," which are properly attributed to Jesus alone. Yet, Christian Tradition often uses the same root titles for Mary as for Christ, but with the clear understanding that Mary is participating on a distinctly human dimension in a divine reality completely dependent upon Jesus Christ. Is this not fully consistent with the Church's theological tradition and its perennial use of the principle of analogy? Entirely different root titles would not fully express the intimacy, beauty and coherency of the one plan of Salvation which God has specifically willed between the Son and the Mother, and ultimately between God and humanity in the work of human salvation, as all members of the Church are called to participate in the divine actions of redemption and grace. As married couples "co-create" with the Father in bringing children into the world; and priests "co-sanctify" with the Spirit in ministering the sacraments of the Church, all Christians are called to "co-redeem" with Jesus in fulfillment of St. Paul's call to "make up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for the sake of his body, which is the Church" (Col 1:24). Mary's title as Co-redemptrix not only illustrates the union of humanity with divinity that God desires in the work of salvation, but also beckons the Church to follow her example as "co-redeemers in Christ,"⁶⁶ and as well proclaims in itself the quintessential Christian message that *suffering is redemptive*.⁶⁷

Still others may object that the Marian doctrine in question is not properly mature for a definition, and that elements associated with the doctrine remain "ambiguous." Yet, Spiritual Maternity, as well as its three essential maternal expressions in coredemption, mediation and advocacy, has been consistently taught by the or-

⁶⁴ Cf. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 11; *Ut Unum Sint*, 36, 18.

⁶⁵ Pope Francis, *General Audience*, September 3, 2014.

⁶⁶ Cf. for example, St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, Jan 13, 1982.

⁶⁷ Cf. St. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris*; Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*.

dinary papal magisterium for over three centuries. Surely, this provides us a magisterial guarantee that all essential aspects of the doctrine are intrinsically true and free from error.

In regards to ancillary questions that may remain in relation to Spiritual Maternity, a distinction must be made between essential questions *intrinsic* to the doctrine and secondary questions *associated* with the doctrine. Spiritual Motherhood is unquestionably a truth contained within the body of Catholic doctrine, with a biblical, patristic, traditional and magisterial foundation that has led pope after pope in the last several centuries to officially and confidently teach the doctrine. Questions closely related but nonetheless secondary to the doctrine in question need not be fully answered before its definition. For example, the “death of Mary” issue which is closely related to the Assumption was not included in the eventual definition of the Assumption by Ven. Pius XII, as it did not constitute an essential aspect intrinsic to the Assumption doctrine, not matter how closely related.

While a solemn definition indeed demands the verification of revealed truth at its essence, it does not require that all secondary questions related to the doctrine must be explained prior to its solemn proclamation, nor that further understanding will not develop after its promulgation. This is evidenced by the profound insights on the deeper meanings of the Immaculate Conception offered by St. Maximilian Kolbe over fifty years after the doctrine’s dogmatization.⁶⁸

Spiritual Maternity, furthermore, possesses stronger implicit biblical support than either the previous two Marian dogmas of the Immaculate Conception or the Assumption, particularly in light of the scriptural testimonies found its Old Testament foreshadowing in Genesis 3:15; at the Annunciation (Lk 1:38); the Visitation, (Lk 1:39), the Prophecy of Simeon (Lk 2:35); the Wedding of Cana (Jn 2:1-10); the Woman of Revelation 12:1; and, most of all, the direct words of Jesus at Calvary (Jn 19:25-27).

In sum, the clear doctrine of Spiritual Maternity, based on its implicit scriptural presence, explicit traditional development, and official magisterial articulation, contains a foundation in the sources of divine revelation and theology that positively sustains its supports its immediate consideration for a solemn definition.

Conclusion

Could *now* be the appropriate time to define solemnly the following Christian doctrine: that ***Mary, the Immaculate, ever-virgin Mother of God, gloriously***

⁶⁸ Cf. For example, Manteau-Bonamy, ed., *The Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of Fr. Kolbe*, Chapters I, II, IV.

assumed into heaven, is the Spiritual Mother of all humanity as Co-redemptrix, Mediatrix of all graces, and Advocate?

Are we not bound by Christian conscience to utilize all the means at the Church's disposal to bring a supernatural remedy into today's exceedingly grave signs of the times? Far from some type of sterile, abstract theological procedure, the defining of a Marian dogma would allow for the release of supernatural power—a momentous spiritual outpouring of grace, peace, and healing that our present world drama urgently needs. As it was Mary who implored the Spirit to descent at the first Pentecost (cf. Acts 1:14), so now, once again, *we must implore Mary as Advocate for a New Pentecost*—for a new descent of the Holy Spirit—in order to infuse the Church's efforts towards family restoration and a new evangelization with heavenly aid that can only come from the divine Sanctifier.

Should we, on the other hand, hesitate to define the Mother's roles and thereby inhibit the full power of her motherly intercession, due to secondary theological questions regarding a doctrine which has already been officially taught by the papal magisterium for centuries? Should we wait to definitively invoke the Mother due to an incomplete understanding of 1 Timothy 2:5? Should we resist the perennial practice of the Church to “turn to Mary” in our presently grave historical moment due to the lack of support from other brother and sister Christian ecclesial bodies, the majority of whom deny *a priori* the office of the papacy from which a Marian definition would necessarily come?

Pope Francis reminds us that we need not be afraid of the struggle of our contemporary journey when we do so with the “help of the Mother”:

Jesus from the Cross says to Mary, indicating John: “Woman, behold your son!” and to John: “Here is your mother!” (cf. Jn 19:26-27). In that disciple, we are all represented: the Lord entrusts us to the loving and tender hands of the Mother, that we might feel her support in facing and overcoming the difficulties of our human and Christian journey; to never be afraid of the struggle, to face it with the help of the mother.⁶⁹

When Jesus first proclaimed Mary “Mother,” from the cross (Jn 19:27), grace, evangelization, and peace was brought into the world. *May a second solemn proclamation of Mary as “Mother” by the Vicar of Jesus advance the Church into a new grace, a new evangelization, and a new peace for the family, for the Church, and for the world.*

⁶⁹ Pope Francis, *Allocution at St. Mary Major's Basilica*, May 4, 2013.

Translations

Coredeemption¹

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A. The Problem and the Church's Current Response

All we have said thus far regarding Mary has been intended to demonstrate her collaboration in the work of salvation. In attempting to better determine in what this collaboration consists, we are consequently seeking to clarify the very depths of the mystery of Mary.

While the divine motherhood has drawn the attention of theologians since the patristic era, following the Nestorian controversy and the definition of the council of Ephesus, Mary's cooperation in the sacrifice of redemption only became the subject of a deeper doctrinal development much later. This delay is particularly due to the fact that in Christology the first centuries were concerned to clarify the problems surrounding the personal makeup of Christ, while systematic work on the doctrinal interpretation of the redemptive sacrifice began only in the middle ages with St. Anselm.

Starting with the medieval era one finds the emergence of a theology which associates Mary with the redemptive work. In our age, this theology has become the object of various tentative hypotheses and of sometimes impassioned debates. Coredeemption is a theme of contemporary theological reflection.²

¹ The following translation is from the Italian, *Maria, La Donna Nell'Opera Della Salvezza*, 239–250.

² With regard to the doctrinal development of Coredeemption, for past sources, cf. C. Dillenschneider, *Marie au service de notre rédemption. Le mérite médiateur de la nouvelle Eve dans l'économie rédemptrice*, Haguenau 1947; J.B. Carol, *De Corredemptione B. V. Mariae. Disquisitio positiva*, Vaticano 1950. For contemporary teaching, cf. C. Dillenschneider, *Le mystère de la Corredemption mariale. Théories nouvelles, Exposé, appréciation critique, synthèse constructive*. Paris 1951; G. Baraúna, *De natura Corredemptionis marianae in theologia hodierna* (1921-1958), *Disquisitio expositivo-critica*, Rome 1960.

1. The term “Coredemption” and its significance

a. – *The title of Coredemptrix*

The doctrine of Mary’s cooperation in redemption presents above all else a difficulty of vocabulary. The title of Coredemptrix has prompted opposition. In the seventeenth century it was rejected by A. Widenfeld, who made the Virgin say, “Do not call me Salvatrix or Corredemptrix,” and depicted her as being anxious to “take away nothing from God.”³ In the nineteenth century it was discarded by Scheeben,⁴ and there are still at present those who refuse to employ it. The accusation is that the title implies an equality between Mary and the Redeemer.

The term was coined recently enough.⁵ One finds the first instance of it in a hymn of the fifteenth century,⁶ where it is explicated with the words, “having suffered with the Redeemer”; later on one finds it in Alain de Varennes (1515),⁷ and more importantly in Salmeron (+1585), a theologian at the Council of Trent.⁸ It is not used with much frequency in the successive centuries,⁹ but in our century, despite the criticisms already referenced, it has become more common.

It also appears in certain acts of the pontifical magisterium. Under the pontificate of Pius X, one finds it in degrees of the Congregation of Rites and of the Holy

³ “Cave ne quidquam Deo detraxeris ut me honores sicut collyridiani... Ne me vocaberis salvatricem et corredemptricem” (*Monita alutaria B.V. Mariae ad cultores suos indiscretos*, Gand 1673, 8-9).

⁴ Scheeben maintained that, without supplementary clarification, the term was ambiguous and potentially scandalous, suggesting a peer relationship between Mary and Christ, instead of a relationship of dependence; such was his reasoning for endorsing Monsignor Rudiger, bishop of Linz (1853-1884) when the latter forbade his clergy to use the term: *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, V, *Erlösungslehre*, n. 1776, ed. C. Feckes, Fribourg in Brissgovia 1954, VI, 2, 463-4.

⁵ On the origin and history of the title, cf. R. Laurentin, *Le titre de Coredemptrice, Etude historique*, Rome-Paris 1951, or in *Mar 13* (1951) 395-452.

⁶ The anonymous hymn *Placatus orationis cuiusdam pauperis ad B. Virginem Filium de cruce depositum quasi in sinu tenentem* (Orat. Ms. S. Petri Salisburgensis, fifteenth century, Codex Petrin. a, III, 20 and *Orat. Ms. S. Petri*, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Codex Petrin. a, I, 20), stanza 20: “Pia, dulcis et benigna, nullo prorsus luctu digna, si fletum hinc eligeres ut compassa redemptory, captivato transgressori Tu corredemptrix fieres.” Stanza 21 reads: “Tibi meae redemptrici”; thus the hymn signals the transition from “redemptrix” to “corredemptrix” (cf. Serapio de Iraqui, *La mediación de la Virgen en la himnografía Latina de la Edad Media*, Buenos Aires 1939, 173; Carol, *De Corredemptione*, 177; Laurentin, *Le titre de Coredemptrice*, 39).

⁷ Untitled Work, contained in *In supersanciam Dei Genitricem Mariam panegyrici*, reproduced in P. Alva Y Astorga, *Bibliotheca Virginalis Mariae*, Madrid 1648, III, 525.

⁸ *Commentarii in Evangelicam historiam et in Act. Ap.*, Cologne 1602, t. III, tr. 5, 38a; t. X, tr. 41, 339b; t. XI, tr. 38, 313a.

⁹ Laurentin lists 27 authors who employ the term in the seventeenth century and 24 who use it in the eighteenth (*op. cit.*, 19).

Office.¹⁰ Pius XI reemploys in two discourses and in a radiobroadcast allocution for the close of the holy year of the Redemption in Lourdes.¹¹ It would be an over-estimation of the weight of these declarations, which are of secondary importance, to conclude that they involve an official sanction of the title Coredemptrix; but at least this use, albeit occasional, shows that the term is legitimate and is beginning to establish itself.

To better justify the legitimacy of this use, it must be observed that the word Coredemption and Coredemptrix have made their entrance in the wake of a doctrinal development which has expressed its meaning with precision, a development in which the attention is fixed on Mary's cooperation with the redeemer. As has been well documented by Laurentin,¹² the term "Coredemptrix" was the substitute for the term "Redemptrix," which evoked the global role Mary fulfilled in the work of salvation as the Mother of the Redeemer. For as long as Mary has been seen as she who, through her maternity, gave the Savior to the world, there has been a title applied to her which causes us to recognize her as being, through of her maternal status, the origin of Redemption. When the advances of the theology of the Redemption facilitated the realization that Mary not only brought the Savior into the world, but was united to his sacrifice for the salvation of humanity, a new term was needed to designate this collaboration. The word Coredemptrix responds to this change in perspective. Since it supplants the title "Redemptrix," it is not intended to exalt Mary as much as possible; on the contrary, it underscores that Mary has only a cooperative role. The phasing out of the title "Redemptrix" emphasizes that only Christ, strictly speaking, merits the title of Redeemer. Mary is simply the one who has suffered with the Redeemer, and in this way cooperates in his work.

Given that in its historical origin the term Coredemptrix tends to signify Mary's cooperation in the work of redemption proper, as distinct from her cooperation in the mystery of the Incarnation, it seems suitable, in itself, for expressing the idea it was intended to express. It enjoys the advantage of brevity and dispenses with the need for more complex expressions, like "Associate of the Redeemer" or "Cooperatrix in Redemption."¹³

It cannot be maintained that the title of Coredemptrix implies or suggests an equality between Mary and the Savior. This would be the case for the previously

¹⁰ Congregation of Rites, decree of May 13, 1908, on the feast of the Seven Sorrows, *ASS* 41 (1908) 409; Holy Office, decree on indulgences, March 27, 1913 and January 22, 1914, *ASS* 5 (1913) 364 c 6 (1914) 108.

¹¹ *Osservatore Romano*, December 1, 1933; March 25, 1934; April 29/30, 1935.

¹² *Il titolo di Corredentrice*, especially 16.

¹³ Expressions proposed by P. Congar as alternatives to *Coredemptrix* (*Bulletin de Théologie*, *RSPT* 27 (1938) 648 n. 1).

used but now abandoned title of Redemptrix, as we have seen. Coredemptrix signals the difference between Mary and her Son: Christ is not coredeemer, but Redeemer. Coredemption implies a collaboration, a secondary contribution to a work in which the Savior is the principle craftsman and, in a certain sense, also the unique craftsman, since he alone bears the title of Redeemer.

Moreover, the title of Coredemptrix allows one to better perceive the similarity between the role of Mary and that of Christians in the work of salvation. Coredemption is on display in Mary in an exceptional, privileged manner, but the fundamental fact contained within it – cooperation in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ – characterizes every Christian life. All men are called to become “coredeemers.” The greatness and the nobility of Mary’s mission helps us discern the greatness and nobility of the Church’s mission and the Christian’s mission. It must be affirmed that the Church is wholly and entirely a coredemptrix, as she follows the path of the Coredemption of Jesus’s Mother.¹⁴

In a certain way, the term Coredemptrix can, after all, claim a biblical basis. In effect, in order to define the status of the Christian, St. Paul devised certain words with an analogous structure: with baptism, we are “co-buried” with Christ (Rom 6:4); by faith we are already “co-risen” with him (Col 2:13; 3:1; Eph 2:6). It is true that this communion of destiny with Christ acknowledges a state brought about in us by God, rather than by any action on our part; thus the co-resurrection is accomplished by the Father, as was, after all, Jesus’s own resurrection. But Paul also affirms our communion in the activity of Christ and in God’s activity in light of the salvation of humanity. He does not hesitate to declare, in reference to his own apostolic activity, “We are coworkers with God” (1 Cor 3:9).

In itself, the expression is audacious. Paul had a profound awareness of the infinite distance that separates God from man, and nonetheless he affirms a true cooperation of the apostle with God. Add to this the principle that every Christian is called to an apostolic mission, and we are bound to recognize that every Christian must cooperate with God in the work of redemption. The word “coredeemer” is no more daring than “coworkers with God”; it is more or less equivalent.

It is from within this outlook that the qualifier Coredemptrix is applied to Mary. While specifying that in her the title has a unique and superior worth, it is further attributed to the Church and to Christians, keeping before one’s eyes the vision of a coredemptive Church and Christians totally committed to the task of coredemption.

¹⁴ Mons. Journet speaks of the “collective, coredemptive compassion of the whole Church” concentrated in Mary’s heart on Calvary (*L’Eglise du Verbe incarné*, II, *Sa structure interne et son unité catholique*, Paris, 1951, 444).

b. – The unique character of coredemption in Mary

In order to understand the unique character of coredemption in Mary, it is necessary to note the theologically established distinction between objective redemption and subjective redemption.¹⁵

Objective redemption designates the global acquisition of salvation for humanity; it is consummated with Christ's death and glorification. Subjective redemption concerns the application of redemption to individual subjects; it continues at present with the development of the Church and her sanctity, with the reception of redemptive graces in every human existence, and with the sacramental life. This application comes about with the free consent of persons, and is realizable insofar as each person's dispositions are found favorable.

When one speaks of the coredemption of Christians, one is dealing with cooperation in subjective redemption: Christians are called to assist in the diffusion of the life of grace in themselves and in others, with the strength of their personal holiness and their apostolic mission. This form of cooperation occurred in Mary's case; she accepted the grace with the subjective dispositions that allowed her complete development; furthermore, through her relationships and her witness she encouraged in others a docile conduct towards the divine will. She acted with goodness towards a number of persons who found themselves in her path.

But what is singular in Mary is that in her coredemption implies a cooperation in objective redemption. While within the realm of subjective redemption Mary's earthly life had only a limited effect on a limited number of persons, this same life, in virtue of her cooperation in objective redemption, has exercised an influence on the whole of humanity. Indeed, Mary collaborated with Christ in the general work of redemption and in the acquisition of salvation for all men, of all times and all places. The scope of coredemption in Jesus's Mother is therefore incomparable to that of the coredemption of Christians. It coincides with the whole extension of Christ's redemptive work.

Mary's cooperation in objective redemption is not subject to doubt, since the divine maternity expresses a fundamental aspect of this cooperation: bringing the Redeemer into the world, Mary contributed in an essential way to the global work of salvation. Nevertheless the problem concerns the nature of this cooperation.

¹⁵ This distinction, proposed by Scheeben with respect to Christ's expiatory merit (*Katholische Dogmatik*, V, 2, 1330, ed. Feckes, 198a), takes on its full significance in the debate over Coredemption. It was emphasized by H. Lennerz (*De Beata Virgine*, Rome 1935, n. 219, 163), and frequently plays a role in mariological thought.

Theology distinguishes between mediate and immediate cooperation. Mediate, or indirect, cooperation, consists simply in the divine maternity, and in the act of giving, through this maternity, a Savior to humanity. If this cooperation had expressed the whole of Mary's coredemption, her role would have been similar to that of the mothers of numerous great men in history; Caesar's mother, for example, or Alexander's, gave important men to humanity, but were not particularly associated with their sons and were not destined to cooperate with them. These women had no direct part in the greatness of the work achieved.

We must ask whether Mary's cooperation does not go beyond this. Immediate, or direct, cooperation in objective redemption concerns the redemptive work itself; here we are not dealing merely with giving a Savior, but with cooperating with him in humanity's salvation. This cooperation implies that Mary supplied her personal cooperation to the redemptive sacrifice in view of the acquisition of all the graces of salvation. It requires not only that Mary shared in the sufferings of the Redeemer, nor that her compassion had meritorious worth, but that unlike other men and women, she also contributed with this compassion to meriting the liberation and sanctification of all humanity.

In Mary coredemption takes on its full significance and its full worth once it admitted as immediate cooperation by meritorious association in the redemptive sacrifice.

2. Mary's coredemption in the current thought of the Church

The discussions which arose among theologians, especially before Vatican II, regarding the nature of Mary's cooperation in redemption showed that the Church is inclined to take the importance of this cooperation ever more seriously, but that an effort of theological reflection was particularly necessary in order to determine more exactly in what marian coredemption consists. Vatican II consolidated, to an appreciable extent, the fruit of this research, even though it did not wish to pronounce upon controversial points.

We will first consider the voice of the pre-council magisterium, and then the teaching proposed by the council itself.

a. — *Teaching of the pontifical encyclicals*

Since Leo XIII a great number of pontifical documents have expressed the doctrine of Coredemption, but without presuming to impose it as a doctrine to be followed by theologians or the faithful.¹⁶

In many encyclicals on the rosary, Leo XIII affirms Mary's active involvement in the mysteries of redemption, her association in the sacrifice with the oblation of her son, and her participation in redemptive merit.¹⁷ In these doctrinal developments one finds the starting point for marian piety; we have already observed the existing link between cult and doctrine, which shows how marian theology seeks to express the sense of the Christian people's attitude toward Mary.

Pius X declared that Mary had merited, through her compassion, to be "reparatrix of the fallen world."¹⁸

According to Benedict XV, Mary was present at the death of Christ in virtue of the divine design; she offered up her son in such a manner that it can be said that she, with Christ, ransomed the human race.¹⁹

According to Pius XI, Mary is the reparatrix of humanity together with Christ; from her compassion is derived her role as distributrix of the fruits of redemption.²⁰

In the encyclical on the mystical Body, Pius XII declares that Mary, united to her Son, offered him up to the eternal Father as a new Eve, for all the sons of Adam, in such a manner that she became mother of all Christ's members.²¹ In this

¹⁶ J.B. Carol, *De Corredemptione*, 509-539. This author cites firstly Pius IX, who in the bull *Ineffabilis* calls Mary "parentum Reparatricem, posterorum vivificatricem" (511). Cf. also J. Bittremieux, *Adnotationes circa doctrinam B. Marie Virginis Corredemptricis in documentis Romanum Pontificum*, ETL 16 (1939) 745-788.

¹⁷ *AAS* 27 (1894-1895) 178; 28 (1895-1896) 130-131; 34 (1901-1902) 130-131.

¹⁸ *Ad diem illum*, *AAS* 36 (1903-1904) 453-454; DS 3370.

¹⁹ *Inter Sodalicia*, *AAS* 10 (1918) 181-182: "Beatam Mariam Virginem, quae a vita Iesu Christi publica veluti abesse visa est, si Ipsi mortem oppetenti et cruci affixo adfuit, non sine divino consilio aduisse, ut cum Filio patiente et moriente passa est et pene commortua, sic maternal in Filium iura pro hominum salute abdicavit placandaeque Dei iustitiae, quantum ad se pertinebat, Filium immolavit, ut didi merito queat ipsam cum Christo humanum genus redemisse."

²⁰ *Osservatore Romano*, 20-30 April 1935: "O Mater pietatis et misericordiae, quae dulcissimo Filio tuo humani generis Redemptionem in ara crucis consummanti copatiens et Corredemptrix adstitisti..., conserva in nobis, quaesumus, atque adauge in dies pretiosos Redemptionis et tuae compassionis fructus." To the restrictive interpretation given to this passage by W. Goossens, Carol (*De corredemptione*, 528-530) rightly responds that these words can be understood only in terms of immediate cooperation in objective redemption.

²¹ *Mystici Corporis*, *AAS* 35 (1943) 247-248.

passage one is bound to recognize the explicit intention of referring to cooperation in objective redemption.²²

Also in the encyclical on the Queen of heaven (1954), Mary is called the associate, in the acquisition of salvation, of Jesus Christ, principle of that salvation.²³

These pontifical documents therefore articulate what the theologians call Mary's immediate cooperation in objective redemption. They do not make use of that expression, but they affirm that truth in equivalent terms and often very strongly. Mary offers her son, offers him up to the Father; she is the restoratrix or reparatrix of humanity; she has ransomed the human race with Christ, she participated in redemptive merit, she was associated with the acquisition of salvation.

b. – The teaching of Vatican II

It was not the will of the council to make any definition of faith in any field. As far as concerns marian doctrine, the constitution *Lumen gentium* explicitly affirmed the desire to not restrict the freedom given to theologians in debated questions: the council did not intend "to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and also closest to us" (54).²⁴ Nonetheless, the council articulates a very clear doctrine of coredemption.

With respect to the Annunciation, it underscores the active cooperation of Mary: "Rightly, therefore, the Fathers see Mary not merely as passively engaged by God, but as freely cooperating in the work of man's salvation through faith and obedience" (56). Recall, as we have already pointed out, the interpretation of St. Irenaeus which contrasts Eve's disobedience and unbelief with the faith and obedience of Mary, and the influence of both on humanity's destiny. The council reproduces the principle articulated repeatedly by the Fathers: "death through Eve, life through Mary,"²⁵ and also the title "Mother of the living."²⁶

²² Cf. S. Tromp's commentary, *Periodica de re morali* 32 (1943) 401.

²³ *Ad caeli Reginam*, *AAS* 46 (1954) 633-634; DS 3914. Cf. J. Galot, *Reine de l'univers*, NRT 77 (1955) 492-498.

²⁴ Translator's note: all *Lumen gentium* English translations are taken from Austin Flannery English edition of the documents of Vatican II (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1992).

²⁵ Jerome, *Epist.* 22:21, PL 22, 408. Cf. Augustine, *Serm.* 51, 2:3 PL 38, 335; *Serm.* 232, 2 PL 38, 1108; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 12:15, PG 33, 741 AB; John Chrysostom, *In Ps.* 44:7 PG 55, 193; John Damascene, *Hom. 2 in dorm. B.M.V.*, 3, PG 96, 728.

²⁶ Epiphanius, *Panarion Haer.* 78:18, PG 42, 728 CD – 729 AB.

In describing the consent Mary gives to the angel's message, the council manifests her task in the work of salvation: "Thus the daughter of Adam, Mary, consenting to the word of God, became the Mother of Jesus. Committing herself whole-heartedly and impeded by no sin to God's saving will, she devoted herself totally, as a handmaid of the Lord, to the person and work of her Son, under and with him, serving the mystery of redemption, by the grace of Almighty God" (56). The council speaks of a dedication not just to the person, but to the work of Christ; this signifies quite plainly not merely that Mary cooperated in salvation by her maternal dedication towards her Son, but that she dedicated herself also to his work.²⁷ In this work she served the divine designs, the mystery of redemption, through an association with Jesus that involves both subordination ("*sub ipso*," under him), and cooperation ("*cum ipso*," with him). With this the council discards the objection according to which cooperation in redemption would elevate Mary to a level of equality with Christ – that is, it would threaten the principle of the uniqueness of the Redeemer. Mary acted in dependence on the Redeemer.

After commenting on the Annunciation, the council shows the continuity of cooperation: "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to his death" (57). Consequently, it does not suffice to recognize this union only in certain characteristic moments; the entire maternal life of Mary develops in the sense of cooperation, and the evangelical episodes are only the signs of a constant dispositions.

The council enumerates the different episodes of the hidden life: the visitation, the nativity, the presentation of the child to the temple, Jesus lost and found. Then, it underscores insistently the role revealed at Cana: "In the public life of Jesus Mary appears prominently; at the very beginning when at the marriage feast of Cana, moved with pity, she brought about by her intercession the beginning of the miracles of Jesus the Messiah (cf. Jn 2:1-11)" (58). The influence which Mary exercised on the accomplishment of the first miracle is clearly affirmed: it demonstrates a cooperation in which there is an element of initiative which produces an effect on the very activity of Jesus. This influence is significant: it makes a difference from the beginning, and it will continue throughout the course of the public life.

Recalling Jesus's preaching, the council sees in Mary an attitude of receptivity that consists in listening and in putting the divine word into practice, progressing in a pilgrimage of faith. But it adds that she "faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood (cf. Jn 19:25), in keeping with the divine

²⁷ G. Baraúna has pointed out that the importance, recognized by the council, of the "fiat" at the Incarnation, is intended to correct a perspective that is too exclusively centered on the marian participation at Christ's passion and death (*La Très Sainte Vierge au service de l'économie du salut, L'Eglise de Vatican II*, III, Paris 1966, 1233).

plan,²⁸ enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associated herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple, with these words: 'Woman, behold thy son' (Jn 19:26-27)" (58). One notices the emphasis placed on Mary's active role: she maintains her union with her Son; she does not only suffer with him, but associates herself with his sacrifice; she consents to the immolation.²⁹

Taking up the theme again in order to better clarify the relationship between Mary and the Church, the council declares that Mary "was the gracious mother of the divine Redeemer here on earth, and above all others and in a singular way the generous associate and humble handmaid of the Lord She conceived, brought forth, and nourished Christ, she presented him to the Father in the temple, shared her Son's sufferings as he died on the cross. Thus, in a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope and burning charity in the work of the Savior in restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason she is a mother to us in the order of grace" (61).

Thus the council shows very clearly the unique character of Mary's cooperation; this unique character does not derive only from the excellence of Mary's inner dispositions, but from a maternal cooperation in the life and work of the Savior, cooperation which contributed to the acquisition of regenerative grace.

In no prior document of the magisterium was the doctrine of marian core-demption expounded with such fullness. All the episodes in which Mary involves herself are interpreted in the light of the principle of a cooperation in the redemptive work, according to the higher design of God. The goal of the council was above all to expound Mary's role in the Church, but the foundation of this role is largely articulated in terms of the association which, from the beginning, united the destinies and activities of the mother and her son.

²⁸ The expression "non sine divino consilio" reprises what was said by Benedict XV (cf. *Inter Sodalicia*, *AAS* 10 (1918) 181-182) which underscored the value given to Mary's action by the will of the Father, who required her cooperation for the work of salvation.

²⁹ D. Bertetto points out that while not employing the terminology of immediate cooperation in the Redemption, the Council affirms it when it characterizes Mary's association in all the mysteries of Redemption unto Calvary (*Maria S.S. nel Concilio*, Sal 1966, 288).

The Co-redeeming Mediation of Christians, the Church, the Virgin¹

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In his moral or *ascending mediation* Christ saves us by way of merit and by way of satisfaction or redemption. In his physical or *descending mediation* he saves us by way of an “instrument” or “organ” of the divinity.²

In order to avoid repetition, we unite here under the name of redemption all that relates to ascending mediation: merit and satisfaction.

It is necessary to speak of “redemptive merit” in order to clarify “co-redemptive merit”; and then of “redemptive mediation” in order to clarify co-redemptive mediation.”³

a) Incarnation and redemption

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son” (Jn 3:16). He gave him twice. The first time in the days of the Annunciation and Christmas, when the only Son took a human nature to dwell among us: this is the mystery of the Incarnation. A second time in the days of his agony and death, where, not content with espousing our human nature “by taking the form of a servant and becoming like men,” he wished to marry her miseries and unite himself to her on the most tragic plane of her condition, “humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:7-8): this is the mystery of the Redemption.

¹ The following translation covers vol. II of Journet’s work, *L’Église du Verbe Incarné: La structure interne de l’Église: Le Christ, la Vierge, l’Esprit Saint*, 675–713.—Ed.

² S. THOMAS, III, q. 48, a. 4 and 6.

³ Most mariologists, even when they oppose each other over the fact and the doctrine of the co-redemption of the Virgin, end by accepting, while pointing out the disadvantages themselves, the terminology distinguishing a cooperation as to “objective redemption” or to the “acquisition of graces,” and a co-operation as to “subjective redemption” or to the “the application or distribution of graces.” They dispute among themselves whether to grant the Virgin only the second, or also the first. We shall try to avoid here a terminology which is by no means necessary, which can be nevertheless well understood, but which seems to us inevitably to create misunderstandings.

b) Why the sufferings of the redemption?

1. The sole descent of the Son of God into the flesh, and the inevitable sufferings of his first contact with men would have sufficed, so that he might already raise to God, in the name of sinful humanity and of the whole of creation, an offering whose meritorious and satisfactory value was properly infinite and capable of compensating, in rigor of justice and with superabundance, the infinity of the offense committed against God by sin.

Why, after the “humiliation” of the incarnation, was there still a “lowering” of Christ, a descent into the depths of human pain and distress? What is the most profound reason for this? Here we are before one of the most secret aspects of the redemption.

2. The answer is that human pain and distress will last as long as human history. They would not have appeared without sin; it triggered them. From now on they have become inevitable companions to us. They are the very stuff of our present condition. Jesus could momentarily take them away from us, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Did he come for that? No. His mission was not to abolish human tragedy, but to allow it to have free course and to sanctify it. But then he had to drink first from the chalice of suffering. Knowing what they would be for us, he wanted to take them into his body and heart, to be “a man of sorrows and knowing suffering” (Is 53:3). It is to all human nature that he can say: “It was not for laughter that I loved you, it was not by simulation that I served you; it was not from far away that I touched you.”⁴ The theological preoccupation of St. Thomas is indeed to show here that Christ wanted to carry all human suffering, grasping it in its most intense point and as in its most secret knot.⁵

But by thus assuming human suffering and distress, drawing them into the radiance of his created grace and of the hypostatic union, Christ enlightened them and made them redemptive. What they are in a supreme way in him, who is the only Son, they will become in a derivative way in us, of whom he wants to make children of adoption and his brothers. Thus, because of the supreme outpouring of redemptive grace on the world, human tragedy, in all those who “suffer with” Christ and “die with” Christ, can become co-redemptive with Christ, through Christ, and in Christ. Human suffering is enlightened by the suffering of Christ: if it

⁴ Cf. *The Book of the Blessed Angela of Foligno*, Latin text, ed. Doncoeur, Paris, 1925, 133.

⁵ “If we look at the kinds of suffering, Christ has suffered all human suffering,” III, q. 46, a. 5. “The one and the other pain (that of the senses and that of the soul) were, in Christ, the highest sorrows of the present life.” III, q. 46, a. 6.

is left to us, it is so that we may, in Christ, work for our own rehabilitation and that of others.⁶

3. To the question of a moment ago: why the excess of the humiliation of Christ? Why his descent into the thick of the bloody tragedy of mankind? We can now answer: it is so that all human suffering may be in him, through him, co-redemptive. Jesus, who enters the water of baptism to sanctify it, enters into human suffering to restore it: in him, redemptive, and in us, co-redemptive.

c) A text of St Thomas

Before explaining further what distinguishes the redemptive suffering of Christ from the co-redemptive suffering of Christians, we must transcribe here an important text of St. Thomas.

In his *Commentary* on the passage of St. Paul to the Colossians, 1:24: *Now I rejoice in my sufferings endured for you, and I complete in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of His body which is the Church*, the holy Doctor specifies the relation of the merits and sufferings of Christ to the merits and sufferings of Christians. There are two ways, he says, of understanding this relation: one which is easy, and which is heterodox; the other, which is a profound mystery, and which is divine.

"A superficial reading might lead one to believe that the passion of Christ is insufficient to redeem us, and that the sufferings of the saints are added to it by way of complement. But *this sense is heretical*; for the blood of Christ is sufficient for redemption, it would suffice even for a host of worlds. *He is himself the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world*, it is said (1 Jn 2:2).

The true sense is that Christ and the Church are one mystical person, of whom Christ is the head, and whose body are all the just, each of the just being like a member of the head. Now God, in his predestination, has disposed the measure of the merits in which the total Church must reach, whether in the head or in the

⁶ When St. Thomas, *III. Sent.*, dist. 20, a. 1, q. 2, asks why satisfaction, that is to say the payment of a penalty, should be part of our rehabilitation, he answers among other reasons that "the man who is satisfied is more perfectly reintegrated." Indeed, if man had not fully *satisfied*, his glory after sin would not be so high as in the state of innocence: for there is more glory for man to purge the sin which he has committed, by a full satisfaction, than to be forgiven without satisfaction. Similarly, there is more glory for man to receive eternal life as a reward for his *merits* than to achieve it without merit. For what one deserves, one holds in a certain way of oneself; and when one is satisfied, one is, in a certain way, the author of his rehabilitation." *Let us not forget, when reading this text*, that St. Thomas, when he speaks here of the satisfaction and merit of man, thinks first and foremost of the satisfaction and merit of this man who is Christ Jesus: all of distinction 20 treats of the causes of the passion of Christ. It is in total dependence and in total subordination to Christ, that our satisfaction and our merit contribute to our rehabilitation. See above, 653-654, note 3.

limbs, just as he has predestined the number of the elect, and the purest of these merits are the sufferings of the holy martyrs. The merits of Christ, who is the head, are infinite; but each saint must merit according to his measure.

This is why the apostle says, *I complete what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ*, that is to say, in the sufferings of the whole Church, of which Christ is the head. *I complete*, that is to say: I add my manner. And that *in my flesh*, that is, in suffering myself. We can also read: I complete *what is lacking in my flesh* to the sufferings of Christ. But what is lacking? It is necessary that the Christ, who has suffered in his own body, suffer similarly in Paul his member, and in all the others. And this *for his body, which is the Church*, that it may be thus redeemed by Christ.”⁷

Thus, the merits of Christ arouse the merits of the Church, not by way of *addition*, but by way of *participation*; not by way of *juxtaposition*, but by way of *compenetration*: as the Being of God arouses the being of the universe.

d) The Redemptive Merit of Christ

There is therefore a profound resemblance but also an insurmountable abyss between the redemptive suffering of Christ and the co-redemptive suffering of Christians.

The redemptive offering of Christ on the cross, in which all his life is summed up, is divine as to the offering and human as to the thing offered: it is divine-human, or theandric.

Because, on the one hand, of the dignity of the One who offers, the meritorious and satisfactory value of this offering is, in strict terms, *infinite*: through it, creation gives God incomparably more glory than it can cause him insult. On the other hand, from the divine disposition which binds the destiny of men to that of Christ and of the “economy” by which Christ receives habitual grace, not only as a particular person but also as the head of the Church, the part of the human suffering which it assumes becomes, in him and in him alone, *redemptive*.

This means that this suffering is counted by God, not only for Christ, of whom we know that he must suffer to enter bodily into his glory (Lk 24:26), but also because of him, for all mankind. It is in consideration of the supplication of the passion of Christ that every grace is given to the world, from the day after the fall to the end of time; the supplication of the passion of Christ is the work to

⁷ The Commentary to the Colossians is a faithful transcription of the lessons of St. Thomas, made by Reginald of Piperno. GRABMANN, *Thomas von Aquin*, Munich, 1935, 32.

It will be noticed that St. Thomas says here that the body of the Church is the righteous, *corpus omnes justi*. Not, however, in the condemned sense of Quesnel, see 1128 [in previous editions; In Vol. III of the present edition: conclusion of Excursion VI “On the Church without spot or wrinkle”].

which God decides to attach all the graces, to which he promises to grant in ransom, in compensation, all graces. If the relation of a work to its ransom, to its compensation, is called merit, and if merit is based on a true proportion of the work to its compensation is called merit by “right of justice” or merit *de condigno*, it must be said that the supplication of the passion of Christ is meritorious in justice, *de condigno*, of all the graces given to men: the justice in question being that which binds God by virtue of his own ordinance, of his own promise.

The value of *ransom*, of *buying back*, of the *redemption* of the passion of Christ, and therefore its *undeniable proportion to the salvation of the world* is often attested to in Scripture. It is in the beloved Son, says St. Paul, “that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins” (Eph 7:7). “For there is one God, and there is one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:5-6). “Christ ... entered the sanctuary once and for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb 9:12).

e) The coredemptive merit of Christians

By the supplication of his death on the cross Christ merited “*de condigno*” for men the grace (ascending mediation) which flows from his heart and he communicates to them (descending physical mediation).

The habitual grace which passes from Christ to men is Christ-conforming, tending to make them similar to Christ as far as the insuperable distance permits which separates the only Son from all the sons of adoption, and Christ who is the head, from the Church, which is the body.

In Christ, grace resides primarily and *as a source*; in the Church, it is, for its appearance, its preservation, its growth, totally and perpetually *dependent* on Christ.

In Christ, grace, connoting the hypostatic union with the Word, confers on his actions, and especially upon the excess of the human sufferings which he assumes, a value of supplication which is theandric, infinite. And it obtains “*de condigno*,” first for Christ, the glorification of his own passible body; then, for us, all the graces of salvation: “*de condigno*” means by “right of justice,” but a justice which can only be proportional here, and which presupposes the free divine pre-acceptance of counting the sufferings of Christ, not only for himself but also for the whole world. This is the *merit of Christ*.

In the Church and Christians, Christ-conforming grace acts as a life-giving sap, an intrinsic power of sanctification and illumination, empowering them to live and die with Christ and in Christ, and conferring to their activity thus transformed, this value of supplication and demand which theology calls merits. It is now a merit

dependent on that of Christ, a *co-merit in Christ*. It can take two forms, to which the notion of merit is proper, but in an unequal, proportional, analogical way.

Indeed, on the one hand, grace proportions the present life of the Christian to the life of heaven. Here, but this time in the Christian, the *merit of condignity*, "*de condigno*." Let us avoid speaking here, as certain theologians are imprudently doing, "of strict justice"; let us speak rather of "a certain justice," or – this is the exact word – of "condignity." This merit counts only for the person who carries it, as the oil of the virgins of the Gospel. It is founded in justice, namely, in that justice which is only proportional, by which God binds himself, and which presupposes the divine pre-acceptance to glorify in Christ the man who suffers and dies in Christ: "We are heirs with Christ, if we suffer with him, in order to be glorified with him" (Rom 8:17). It is this merit of which every Christian, knowing that he is a "useless servant" (Lk 17:10), must have concern for himself and which is spoken of in the beatitudes: "Blessed are you when they curse you ... Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven" (Mt 5:11-12).

On the other hand, the Christian in a state of grace can intercede for others in a very pressing way. His prayer, not merely because he prays, but because he is in a state of grace and in divine friendship, has a right to be heard: at least insofar as it is proper for God to do, when she is holy, the will of his friends. Without doubt it is no longer a "right of justice"; it is a "right of friendship." This is the *merit of convenience*, "*de congruo*."⁸ It is of this, above all, that it is a question, when Jesus asks his friends to pray that the Father's name may be glorified, his kingdom come, his will be done (Mt 6:9), begging the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to his harvest (Mt 9:38); or when St. Paul writes to the Colossians: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I complete in my flesh what is lacking in Christ's affliction for the sake of his body, which is the Church" (Col 1:24).

Thus the intercession and mediation of Christians in a state of grace who pray for the salvation of the world derives its value, not from the simple prayer, as a

⁸ S. THOMAS distinguishes between merit of condignity and merit of congruity when he asks whether a man can deserve for another the first grace, that is to say, the grace of justification, of conversion: "It is the question of the *merit of condignity* that Christ alone, but no other, may deserve for others the first grace. Each one of us, in fact, is moved by God by the gift of grace in order to arrive at eternal life himself, and that is why the merit of condignity does not extend beyond this motion. But the soul of Christ is moved by God through grace not only to make Himself the glory of eternal life, but also to lead others there as the Head of the Church and the author of the salvation of men, having according to Hebrews 2:10 to lead to glory a great number of sons. It is a question of the merit of congruity that a man may deserve for another the first grace; for, inasmuch as man in a state of grace fulfills the will of God, it is fitting according to the proportion of friendship that God fulfill the will of this man to save another: although, on the side of this one, obstacles can arise." I-II q. 114, a. 6.

man who is still a sinner can do,⁹ but from the quality of this prayer when she ascends with a heart more or less deeply united to Christ: “Verily, verily I say unto you, whatever you ask of the Father, he shall give it unto you in my name; so far you have asked for nothing in my name” (Jn 16:23-24).

f) Redemptive mediation and co-redemptive mediation

It is now easy to compare the redemptive mediation of Christ with the co-redemptive mediation of the Christians and the Church.

Only the mediation of Christ is *redemptive*. This means that it is first, that it alone is theandric, it alone is infinite in rigorous terms, it alone is meritorious in justice, “*de condigno*,” of the salvation of all men: “For there is one God, and there is one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:5-6). “Christ alone,” says St. Thomas, “is a perfect mediator between God and men, because he has reconciled through his death, the human race with God. Thus, the apostle, speaking of the unique mediation of Christ, adds that he has given himself as a ransom for all.”¹⁰

The mediation of Christians and of the Church can only be *co-redemptive*. This means that it is entirely suspended from that of Christ, that it derives its full value from it, that it is meritorious to the salvation of another “*de congruo*,” by virtue of the proprieties of friendship, which bear God to hear those who, in Christ, ask in the name of Christ.

Christ, who merited in condignity the conversion of Augustine, helped Monica to co-merit this same conversion by the power of her tears. He merited in condignity that the reign of God should come upon the earth; he helps us, when we say the *Our Father* with love, to co-merit the coming of this reign. The redemptive mediation of Christ precedes, arouses, supports the co-redemptive mediation of Christians, the Church, and the Virgin.

g) Co-redemptive mediation is a mediation of supposit and an immediacy of virtue

It is important, from now on, to fully clarify the relationship between the redemptive mediation of Christ and the co-redemptive mediation of Christians, the Church, and the Virgin. The difficulties experienced by the Protestants, for example, in admitting a mediation other than that of Christ, are partly due to their mis-

⁹ Prayer as such is an appeal to divine omnipotence; when it emanates from a heart which has not yet left sin, it can have no other value.

¹⁰ III, q. 26, s. 1.

understanding of the nature of the mediation of intercession. They think: *addition* and *juxtaposition*, where one should think: *subordination*, *participation* and *compenetration*.

The mediation of intercession is a mediation of the moral order, but it is clarified by a distinction made by the ancients about mediation in

the metaphysical order and in the physical order. The moon is carried by the earth, which is carried by the sun. Between the moon and the sun, the earth is a reality, a *supposit* interposed. It does indeed bear the moon, but without lightening the sun, which carries totally, by its virtue of attraction, both the earth and the moon. This is what is expressed by saying that between the sun and the moon there is *mediation of supposit*, but *immediacy of virtue*.¹¹

Let us transpose this distinction into the order of intercessory prayer. The conversion of Augustine is suspended from the prayers of Monica, herself suspended from the prayer of Christ on the cross. Let it not be said that Monica carries nothing. Let it not be said that what Monica carries Christ does not have to bear.

Redemptive mediation is that which always carries all, totally, by the immediacy of virtue: it carries certain things by supposits interposed, and others, without supposits interposed. Co-redemptive mediation is that which intervenes in supposit, without breaking the immediacy of redemptive virtue: it carries very heavy burdens, but insofar as it is itself totally carried by the unique mediation of redemption.

h) Individual Co-Redemptive Mediation of Christians

If Christ, who is the head, is *redeemer*, and there is a symbiosis between the head and the body, it must be said that the Church is *co-redemptive*. Consequently, insofar as a man becomes a member of Christ and of the Church, he is called to be a co-redeemer.

Perhaps it does not belong except *by desire* to Christ and to the Church in complete act. Yet, especially if this desire is intense, we will see the prayer of intercession forming spontaneously in his heart. Thus, before Christ, the mediation of Abraham for Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis (18:23-33) is not only a solemn prefiguration, but already an anticipated participation in the redemptive mediation of Christ; it has not saved the sinful cities, and Jerusalem in the days of Titus and Vespasian will not be saved, but it will have been able to obtain at the last moment the salvation of souls, victims of these sinful cities. After Christ, belonging to Christ and the Church by desire alone, it continues to have similar effects: we will

¹¹ One may think, with CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, of the iron ring which attracts insofar as it is itself attracted by the magnet. *Strom.*, VII, 2; PG 11, 413.

see, for example, the *bassidim* rediscover, in the eighteenth century, the value of the prayer of intercession of the just.¹²

For those who belong *effectively and corporeally* to the Church in its complete act, in which grace is fully Christian, *i.e.* sacramental and oriented, they are, of this very fact, called in an immediate manner to intercede for others. They can, without doubt, miss their vocation, live in mediocrity, pass alternatively from sin to grace, and end up simply being “saved because of the prayer of others” – or perhaps, alas! of the damned. But, insofar as they are faithful to their vocation, they are asked to intercede at every Mass, and even at each *Our Father*, for the salvation of the world. Their task is not simply to be *members saved* by Christ, but to be in Christ, with Christ, through Christ, *co-redemptive members* of the rest of men. St. Paul never ceases to pray to God for his disciples, asking that they be filled with knowledge of the divine will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col 1:9); he even goes so far as to wish to be anathema and separated from Christ for the salvation of his own (Rom 1:3). The saints are those who, in Jesus, give their lives for the salvation of the world.¹³

¹² “Master of the World,” said R. Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apta on his deathbed, “you know that I have no merit or good for which you can bring me into paradise after my death, among the just. You must therefore place me in hell among the wicked. You know, Master of the World, that I have hated, with extreme hatred, all those who transgress your will; how could I then dwell with them? This is why I implore thee to bring out of hell all the wicked out of the children of Israel, that I may be brought therein” P. J. DE MENASCE, *Quand Israël aime Dieu*, 1931, 163. The author adds a little further on, 175: “It cannot be denied that with this profound understanding of prayer and the role of the saints as mediators between men and God there really is something new in Judaism ... The innovation is in practice, in this strange phenomenon that is the Hasidic movement, where we see the masses accepting a notion that may seem simple to us and of good sense, which was not so, and which continues not to be, for those who, for many centuries, have lost the meaning ... of intercession.”

¹³ “The desire to bear all pain and fatigue until death for the salvation of souls is very pleasing to me. The more one bears, the more she shows that she loves me; the more one loves me, the more sweetness one knows; and the more one knows, the more intolerable is the pain and sorrow of seeing me offended. You asked me to place on you and punish you for the sins of others; and you did not know that it was asking for love, light, knowledge of truth. For I have told you, the greater is the love, the greater the pain and sorrow.” Saint CATHERINE OF SIENA, *Libro della divina dottrina*, Bari, 1912, 11; trans. Hurtaud, t. I, 18. “I saw by an inner certainty the demons triumph over those poor souls whom they wrested from the domain of Jesus Christ, our divine Master and sovereign Lord, who had redeemed them by his precious Blood. On these views and certitudes, I entered into jealousy, I could not take it any longer, I embraced all these poor souls, held them in my bosom, presented them to the eternal Father, telling him that it was time for him to do justice in favor of my Bridegroom, that he knew very well that he had promised him all nations for an inheritance...” MARY OF THE INCARNATION, ursuline, *Écrits spirituels- et historiques*, Paris, 1930, t. II, 310. Cf. the encyclical *Mystici corporis*, A. A. S., 1943, 213 and 221; See above, 558.

i) Collective co-redemptive mediation of the Church

1. Of the individual co-redemptive mediation of the Christian, it must be said: (1) that it is measured by the intensity of its own fervor; (2) that it is deployed around it by concentric circles, according to what St. Thomas calls "the order of charity,"¹⁴ which grades and hierarchizes the obligations of each: it is first for Augustine that Monica must pray and cry; (3) finally, that it does not extend far beyond the generations of which it is contemporary, so that, as Cajetan did when he wanted to prove that the Pope did not to designate his successor,¹⁵ he recalled the word of the Lord: "Do not be worried about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself: let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day" (Mt 6:34).¹⁶

2. The collective co-redemptive mediation of the Church is also measured by its fervor, which can be relaxed or intensified according to time and place. But still, the fervor of the Church is greater than that of each of its members; it is made of an impetus which comes from Pentecost and which brings her to the encounter of the Parousia: the more delicate the piety of her children, the more so they experience the power of that impulse which raises and carries them, and the more they know the value of the prayer of intercession of the Church, the Bride of Christ.

The primary and immediate end of the Church's prayer is the gradual and ever closer attachment of the universe to Christ. She implores by the *Our Father* the continual coming of the reign of God. The primary intention of each Mass is that of the Cross, namely the sanctification and expansion of the Church, the body of Christ, and by that, for it is the same thing, the salvation of the world.¹⁷

But the present Church does not exist *tota simul*. She endures in time. From then on, it is at every hour of her existence that she bears before God the burden of humanity which is contemporary with her. At least for one part: for if God sends some workers to his harvest of himself (immediacy of supposit), and if he sends other workers again when we pray to him, Mt 9:37-38 (mediation of supposit); if it is true, more generally, that he saves men, either by first gifts which precede all their thoughts (immediacy of supposit), or, on the contrary, by raising and offering up their prayers (mediation of supposit), we must say that a great part of the graces of conversion given to the world at each period of its duration are the effect of the intercession of the Church at the same time (mediation of supposit).

¹⁴ II-II, q. 26.

¹⁵ *Apologia de comparata auctoritate papae et concilii*, chap. XIII, n. 740.

¹⁶ It is necessary to reserve, however, the case of exceptional vocations, as we have done above, 570, note 552.

¹⁷ "The canon of the Mass testifies, if examined, that even Masses celebrated with particular intentions are nevertheless always celebrated explicitly *for the living and the dead*." CAJETAN, *De missae celebratione*, *Opusculum*, t. II, treatise III, chap. II.

It must even be added that the Church, at every period of her duration, answers before God of the corresponding duration of purgatory, insofar as she can contribute to alleviate the exile by her mediation (of supposit).

3. If we now consider the Church, no longer at any time in her life, but in all her duration, from Pentecost to the Parousia, can we say that her co-redemptive mediation, extending to all men during all time, is *universal*? Yes, but on the condition that such a universality is only *relative*; for the co-redemptive mediation of which we are speaking: (1) is fully valid only for the age when the Church is fully formed, that is, for the age which, according to the apostles, is the last or eschatological age of the world, and which begins at Pentecost; (2) it obtains only a part, doubtless important, but not all, of the graces given to men.

j) First and universal co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin

Unlike the collective co-redemptive mediation of the Church, the personal co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin is universal absolutely: (1) it extends to all men of all times; (2) it obtains for them (mediation of supposit) all the graces which derive from the redemption of Christ (immediateness of virtue); (3) it is therefore anterior and enveloping in relation to the co-redemptive mediation of the Church. The mediation of the Virgin is, therefore, the point towards which the mediation of the Church tends without ever joining it, as the curve tends towards its asymptote. It is in the Virgin alone that the Church can become mediatrix (of a co-redemptive mediation) of all graces, *mediatrix omnium gratiarum*.

1. One recalls how Marian theology proceeded to establish that Mary was conceived without original sin.¹⁸ To be the worthy mother of God the Redeemer, she was to receive, this is inscribed in the exigencies of so high a notion, all the purity compatible with the fact of her redemption by the cross of Christ. The difficulty was to know whether to exempt the Virgin from original sin was not at the same time to save her from the redemption of Christ. As soon as the notion of “preventive redemption” emerges, the difficulty collapses, and the triumph of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin will be assured.

A similar approach will enlighten the doctrine of the co-redemption of the Virgin. To be the worthy mother of a redeeming God of the whole world, Mary, this is required by such a notion, must be associated with the act of redemption of the world, as intensely, as completely as her condition allows as the first redeemed by the cross of Christ. But can she be co-redemptrix of the whole world, can she be a first and universal co-redemptrix, being herself redeemed? That is the whole question.

¹⁸ See above 674, note 28.

2. The answer depends on two notions: the common notion of co-redemption; the particular notion of first redeemed and first co-redemptrix.

a) We have defined the common notion of co-redemption. Every co-redeemer must first be redeemed; and the more the grace which redeems her is intense in her, the more co-redemptive she becomes. Christ directly ransomed Monica and Augustine; but he causes Monica to join her finite sufferings with his infinite sufferings, a finite charity to his infinite charity, so that it is directly due to the sufferings of Christ that Augustine is redeemed (immediacy of virtue), and directly due to the sufferings of Monica that Augustine is co-redeemed (Monica directly bears Augustine, but as a supposit born in turn by Christ). The conversion of Augustine is entirely merited, first and in condignity, by Christ, and wholly co-merited in the second place and in convenience by Monica. Co-redemption is to redemption, co-merit is to merit, as participation is to the Source – taking from it without bringing anything to it – as the being of the universe is to the Being of God: after creation, say theologians, there is not, intensively, more being (*non est plus esse*) there are only many participants in being (*sunt plura entia*). Wanting to suppress our co-merit in Christ for fear of doing harm to the merit of Christ, our co-redemption in Christ for fear of doing harm to the redemption of Christ, *this is not to honor; it is on the contrary to blaspheme the merit of Christ and the redemption of Christ*. And to demand, “what do co-merit and co-redemption in Christ matter, when the merit and redemption of Christ suffice,” is ultimately to ask what does the being of the universe matter, when the being of God suffices.

b) If Mary were redeemed in the common way, like St. John, St. Monica, the rest of men, she would be co-redemptrix in the manner of St. John, St. Monica, and the rest of men. But precisely – this is the dogma of her “preventive redemption” and her Immaculate Conception – Mary is redeemed in an absolutely unique way, superior to all the rest of men, she is the first of the redeemed: in the order of the intensity of grace, for in the order of the succession of time Adam is the first of the redeemed. She is therefore co-redemptrix in an absolutely unique way, superior to all the rest of men, she is, in the order of the intensity of grace, the first co-redemptrix. Jesus redeems her on the cross so that, once redeemed by him alone, she is co-redemptrix with him of all that he is the redeemer, that is to say, of all the rest of the human race. The privilege of her Immaculate Conception, the fullness and growth of her charity, the successive favors with which she had been filled, and which had been conceded to her by anticipation and because of the future Passion of Christ, all these graces were destined, when the Cross would be erected, to be united to the infinite Passion of Christ, directly redemptive of the Virgin herself and of all other men, by the act of unspeakable Compassion, exceeding in intensity,

elevation, amplitude, all that men are capable of conceiving, and directly co-redemptive of all other men.

3. To the question we asked a moment ago: can Mary be a co-redeemer of the whole world, being redeemed herself? It must be answered that Mary, being the first redeemed, above all the rest of humanity, is therefore the first co-redemptrix, above all the rest of humanity. In Mary, the Church reaches the point towards which she tends without being able to attain it by herself alone.¹⁹ In Mary, the Church is fully the Church: in Mary the Church becomes co-redemptrix in Christ, of all that Christ is the only redeemer, namely, of all men, whether they know it or not, of those who have lived from the beginning of the world to Christ, and of those who have lived since Christ until the end of the world.

Just as the sun carries the earth, which carries the moon, but all the weight of the earth and the moon ultimately weighs directly on the sun, so the redemptive mediation of Christ carries the universal co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin Mary, which in turn brings about the relatively universal co-redemptive mediation of the Church and the particular co-redemptive mediation of Christians, for there are souls who bear others as a planet its satellites; but all the weight of the particular co-redemptive mediation of Christians, and the relatively universal co-redemptive mediation of the Church, and the absolutely universal co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin, ultimately weighs on that moment of Christ's life when he enters into his agony and dies on the cross.

k) Progress of the doctrine of the universal co-redemption of Mary. Eve and Mary

1. The parallel of the first and second Eve was already worthy, as we have said, to remind us that both were created without any sin, immaculate.

The Fathers used this same parallel, but to oppose the contrary fates of Eve and Mary, one cooperating in our catastrophe, the other in our redemption. They draw our attention to the positive role of Mary in our redemption.

Yet the principle of Mary's co-operation in the work of our redemption remains with the Fathers in an enveloped state, without being able to display all its

¹⁹ "The whole Church is co-redemptive because it co-operates in the redemption of men not only as an instrument of the grace of Christ, but by the offering of her own sacrifice. But the Virgin Mary is before the Church and for the foundation of it ... Among the co-redeemers, she is the co-redemptrix *par excellence*. She is the first and the model in that order. Among all the associates of Christ, she is *par excellence* the Associate. She is the model and type of the Church, the Bride *par excellence*, the one in whom the human race is more closely co-assumed with the holy humanity of Christ." M.-J. NICOLAS, O.P. "The Co-Redemption," *Revue Thomiste*, 1947, 44.

consequences. How could it be otherwise? The theology of the mystery of the *redemptive incarnation* develops in stages. It is especially the theology of the *incarnation* that retains the attention of the first Christian centuries. When it is fully elaborated, the theology of redemption can be constituted, in dependence on it, with the *Cur Deus homo* of St. Anselm and the *Summa* of St. Thomas. When, therefore, the Fathers affirm the principle of Mary's co-operation in our redemption, they first hear of her cooperation in the work of the incarnation, which will be redemptive. Later, the same principle, which they use in a still general and remote way, can be applied in a more immediate and more precise manner, and to understand the co-operation of Mary in the very work of redemption. In the first instance, Mary's co-operation will be seen primarily as a *ministry* and a *service*. In the second, it will necessarily appear under the aspect of co-intercession and co-merit. It is then that the notion of the universal co-redemptive mediation of Mary can be fully explained.

2. Mary positively cooperated in our redemption by freely giving birth to the Redeemer through her faith and obedience at the time of the Incarnation. This is the theme which the Fathers will hardly surpass.

In the *Dialogue with Tripho* (c. 150-155), Saint Justin contrasts Eve, docile with the Serpent, who gives birth to death, with Mary, docile to the Angel, who gives birth to Life: "Eve, virgin and without corruption, received in her the word of the serpent and bred disobedience and death. But the Virgin Mary felt faith and joy, when the Angel Gabriel announced to her that the Spirit of the Lord would descend upon her, that the power of the Most High would cover her with his shadow, that consequently the holy one who would be born of her would be the Son of God. And she said, "Let it be done to me according to your word."²⁰

St. Irenaeus (verses 140-202) opposes Mary, wife and virgin, repairing in obedience for all mankind what Eve, wife and virgin, had destroyed in disobedience for the whole human race: "Just as Eve, having Adam for her husband, but still virgin, was by her disobedience cause of death for her and all mankind; Mary, destined for a husband but yet virgin, was by her obedience cause of salvation for her and all mankind, *et sibi et universo generi humano*. And if the Law calls the bride still virgin, it is to signify the recommencement, the circuit, *recirculationem*, which goes from Mary to Eve; for what had been bound could only be loosened by a contrary knot, the first knot being defeated by the second, the second delivering from the first. Thus the knot of Eve's disobedience is defeated by the obedience of Mary, which a vir-

²⁰ *Dialogue*, chap. C, n. 5, PG., t. VI, col. 709.

gin (wife) had bound by her unbelief, another virgin (wife) unties by her faith.”²¹ In the *Proof of Apostolic Preaching*, Irenaeus writes: “It was because of a disobedient virgin that man was struck, and after his fall was subjected to death; in the same way, it was because of the Virgin who is docile to the word of God that man has been regenerated at the hearth of life ... It was just and necessary ... that Eve was restored in Mary, ‘so that a virgin becoming the advocate of a virgin, the disobedience of one was effaced and destroyed by the obedience of the other.’”²²

The same parallel is more dense in Tertullian, in *De carne Christi* (208-211) : “The ways God uses to win back man, made in his image and likeness, are parallel to those of which the devil had used to rob him of it. A word of death had come to the virgin Eve; the Word of life was to come also into a virgin: so that what was lost by the woman might be saved by the woman. Eve believed the Serpent, Mary believed Gabriel; where the credulity of one sinned, the faith of the other repairs.”²³

For Saint Augustine, “a great mystery was suggested in that death had come to us by a woman, life would come to us by a woman; and that the devil was vanquished and thwarted by our dual nature, feminine and masculine,”²⁴ by the Virgin and Christ.

Elsewhere, in an important text, in which he considers not only the maternal love of the Virgin for Christ, but also the maternal love of the Virgin for us, and thus, as a result, seems to pass from the consideration of the role of the Virgin in the incarnation, and the direct consideration of her role in redemption. He teaches that Mary, the bodily mother of Christ, who is the head, is in all truth spiritually mother “of his members, because she has co-operated by her charity to bring into the Church the faithful who are members of this head, *quia cooperata est caritate ut fideles in Ecclesia nascerentur, quae illius capitis membra sunt.*”²⁵

²¹ *Adversus haereses*, book III, chap. XXII; PG 7, 959. “It could only be loosened by a contrary knot”: according to the editor, Dom Massuet, the meaning would be “could only be loosened by pulling back the ends of the tie.”

²² *Patrologia Orientalis*, t. XII, 772, n. 33.

²³ *De carne Christi*, chap. XVII, PL 2, 782.

²⁴ *De agone christiano*, chap. XXII; PL 40, 303.

²⁵ *De sancta virginitate*, chap. VI, n. 6; PL 40, 399. One can give birth to others unto Christ in two ways: by way of intercession or merit, and by way of ministry or service. These two paths require intertwining. Does the text of St. Augustine signify that Mary by her charity merits to give birth to us unto Christ? In this case, it would go beyond the preceding texts and introduce us further into the doctrine of co-redemptive mediation. Saint Augustine commented at this place on the word of Jesus, Mt 12:50: “Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven is my brother and my sister and my mother.” For those, he said, who have grace, being co-heirs with Christ, they are spiritually his brothers and sisters. But for the soul who does the will of the Father in love, gives birth to others according to grace,

3. The doctrine of the co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin, which can only become clear in dependence on the progress of the theology of redemption, is only the explication of the supreme principle of Mariology: *Mary is the worthy mother of a God who becomes incarnate to save us, Mary is the worthy mother of the Redeemer, as the Redeemer.*²⁶

As it is elaborated,²⁷ the theology of co-redemption invites us to reread, with more attentive faith, the mysterious words of Jesus to his Mother, close to his cross, and to St. John: "Jesus, seeing his Mother, and very near, the disciple whom he loved, said to his Mother – *Woman, behold your son!* Then he said to the disciple – *Behold, your mother.* And from that hour the disciple took her into his home" (Jn 19:26-27). It is, indeed, the grandeur of theology, the more it advances and unfolds, to bring us back to Scripture with new eyes, to make us discover depths still unperceived. And how can we forget here that this woman is the one who, in the vision of the apostle, brings into the world the male Child (Rev. 12) and who at Cana of

and forms Christ in them (Gal 4:19), it must be said that she is spiritually the mother of Christ. Even more than a particular soul, the Church is the mother of Christ, for she brings forth by the grace of God the members of Christ, namely the faithful. And Mary, because of the faith and love with which she, too, did the will of the Father, is spiritually the mother of Christ; she gives birth to us unto Christ in a more beautiful and privileged manner, *laudabilius atque beatius*. For her faith was great. To the woman who blessed his mother, it was the true greatness of his mother that Jesus revealed in replying: "Blessed are those who listen to the word of God and keep it!" (Lk 11:28). Mary was "more blessed to receive the faith of Christ than to conceive the flesh of Christ," "her maternal kinship would have served her nothing if, by a higher felicity, she had not borne Christ more in her heart than in her flesh." *De sancta virginitate*, chap. III, n. 3. Thus, Mary gives us birth into Christ: if it were by the value of the intercession of her love, we would have in this text a precision, a de-enveloping, of the doctrine of the co-redemptive mediation of the Christian, of the Church, of the Virgin.

²⁶ As incarnation and redemption are not two irreducible mysteries, but the two successive moments of a single mystery, that of the redemptive incarnation, it follows that Mariology rests not on two juxtaposed principles, the first in which Mary is the mother of God, the second in which she is associated with redemption, but on a single principle revealed in the Gospel: Mary is mother of God the Redeemer, as Redeemer. See above, 663. Cf. B. H. MERKELBACH, O.P., *Mariologia*, Paris, 1939. 91: "Mary consents to these two things: to become the mother of God, and to become the associate of the Redeemer; but she consents to it by a single movement, these two things not being dissociated in the message of the Angel: she accepts to be the mother of God the Redeemer as such."

²⁷ The hesitations which some Catholic theologians still find themselves faced with the notion of co-redemption are, we believe, dispelled by the mere analysis of this notion, and by the manner in which one specifies its application to Christians, to the Church, to the Virgin. In the discharge of the few contemporary theologians who hesitate or refuse to regard the Virgin as co-redemptrix, we can say that they feel the need to protest against certain awkward and insufficiently theological expressions. A list of these theologians can be found in Clement DILLENCHNEIDER, C. ss. R., *Mary in the service of our redemption*, Haguenaau, 1947, 94-105.

Galilee obtains by her mediation the first miracle of Jesus? (Jn 2:1-11). Christ having not communicated to any creature the redemptive grace by which he is the head of the whole mystical body,²⁸ the highest communicated grace is, in the order of co-redemption, the grace by which he gives his Mother a co-redemptive motherhood over all the rest of the mystical body.

4. The doctrine of the co-redemptive mediation of the Virgin appears in recent papal documents.²⁹

Leo XIII shows us, "standing at the foot of the Cross of Jesus, Mary, his Mother, who, touched by an immense desire to receive us as sons, offers her own Son to divine justice, dying with him in his heart, pierced by a sword of grief."³⁰ Elsewhere he declares that "the most holy Virgin, as she is the mother of Jesus Christ, is likewise the mother of all Christians, for she bore them on the hill of Calvary during the supreme torments of the Redeemer."³¹

Pius X says, in a great text that must not be dislocated, for he bears his exegesis with him: "When the last hour of her Son comes, the Mother of Jesus stands by his cross Through a communion of sorrows and will which united her to Christ, Mary merited to become, in a very high way, the reparatrix of the fallen world, and thus the dispenatrix of all the gifts that Jesus has acquired for us through his bloody death³² ... Because of this communion of sorrows and anguish of the Mother and the Son, it was given to this august Virgin to be with her only Son, the mediatrix and conciliatrix of the whole world³³ Because Mary prevails over all by her holiness and union with Christ, and because she has been associated by Christ with the work of the salvation of humanity, she merits us *de congruo*, as they say, what Christ has merited for us *de condigno*, – *de congruo, ut aiunt, promeretur*

²⁸ Cf. S. THOMAS, III, q. 64, a. 4, ad 1 and 3

²⁹ An account may be found at Clement DILLENSCHNEIDER, C.ss.R., *Mary at the service of our redemption*, 44 ff.

³⁰ Encyclical *Jucunda semper*, 8 September 1894.

³¹ Encyclical *Quamquam pluribus*, 15 August 1889.

³² To speak exactly, it is Christ, who is reparator, by merit of condignity; And Mary is co-reparatrix, by merit of convenience, as the Pope will say a few lines below. And it's Christ, who is the dispenser, as "conjoined instrument" to the divinity, of all the gifts he has acquired through his bloody death; and Mary is second-in-command, as *princeps ministra*, as the Pope later says, and, according to some, as a "separate" instrument from the divinity. The word *reparatrix perditū orbis*, borrowed from the monk EADMER (1124), simply meant that the Virgin gave birth to the Savior. *De excellentia Virginis*, chap. IX, PL 159, 574 ff.

³³ She is mediatrix and conciliatrix beside her Son, as the Pope says. In other words, she is mediatrix and conciliatrix of the whole world, not indeed in the sphere of redemption, but in the sphere of co-redemption.

nobis, Quae Christus de condigno promeruit – and she is the first instrument, *princeps ministra*, of the dispensation of graces.”³⁴

According to Benedict XV, “the doctors of the Church commonly report that if the Blessed Virgin Mary, who appeared absent from the whole public life of Jesus Christ, is suddenly present at the death of her crucified Son, it was not without a divine purpose While her Son was suffering and dying, she suffered, and is, as it were, dead with him; she has renounced her maternal rights over her Son for the salvation of men;³⁵ in order to appease divine justice insofar as she could, she sacrificed her Son,³⁶ so that it can be rightly said that she, with Christ, has redeemed the human race.”³⁷

Pius XI invokes “the very benign Mother of God, who gave us Jesus our Redeemer, fed him, offered him as a victim at the foot of the cross, and who through her mysterious union with Christ and a grace exceptional in every way, was also reparatrix, and deserves to be called such.”³⁸

Pius XII shows us Mary, “a new Eve, exempt from any personal or hereditary fault, always closely united to her Son, offering him on Golgotha to the eternal Father with the holocaust of her maternal rights and love for all the sons that Adam defiled by his sad sin; so that the one who, bodily, was the mother of our Head became spiritually the mother of all his members by a new title of sorrow and glory.”³⁹

All these texts of the popes, and this seems crucial to us, are centered on the page of the Gospel where St. John speaks to us of the mysterious presence of Mary near the Cross of Jesus.

5. The parallel of Eve and Mary, found by the Fathers of the apostolic age, can be constantly taken up and enriched.

From the side of the first Adam, sleeping in paradise, came the first Eve, who, during the supreme trial, shares his pride, and drags us with him into catastrophe.

From the side of the second Adam, “sleeping on the cross,” came the second Eve, who shares her love at the supreme sacrifice, and drags us with her into deliverance.

³⁴ Encyclical *Ad diem illum*, 2 February 1904.

³⁵ This trope, taken from Leo XIII, must obviously not be changed into a thesis of “juridical theology.”

³⁶ Not like a Spartan mother. She consented, but in the breaking of her whole being, that her Son should be sacrificed: *Verum-tamen, non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat*.

³⁷ Letter *Inter sodalicia*, March 22, 1918.

³⁸ Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor*, May 8, 1928. The theological word would be *co-reparatrix*.

³⁹ Encyclical *Mystici corporis*, Epilogue, 29 June 1943.

The second Eve is first of all Mary. She comes entirely from Christ on the Cross. It is, indeed, by virtue of the passion of Christ that she is immaculate from the beginning. And it is the passion of Christ that will provoke in her that unimaginable compassion, which, with God, will merit in convenience what the passion itself merits in condignity, namely the universal salvation of the human race. The merit of convenience, which includes degrees, will know its supreme intensity in Mary, if Jesus gives her to us as Mother.

The second Eve is then the rest of the Church. She is born from the side of Christ from which emerge water and blood symbolizing baptism and the Eucharist, in short the sacraments, which, according to St. Thomas, make the Church.⁴⁰ She is also immaculate, without spot or wrinkle or anything like it. In the likeness of the Virgin she is also compassionate, although her compassion is less intense and less extensive. At every moment of the world the Mass brings to her all the passion of Christ so that by her compassion at that time she may work to save the world at that moment. The passion of Christ merits in condignity, and the compassion of Mary in convenience, all the graces of all men; the compassion of the Church of each age merits in its own right an important part of the graces of all men of that period.

The prayer of each Christian is raised by the prayer of the Church, raised herself by the prayer of the Virgin, raised in turn by the prayer of Christ on the Cross, to which, in the last instance, is suspended all the weight of the world.⁴¹

1) Mediation of the earth and mediation of heaven

One frees oneself of many confusions by being attentive to distinguishing the mediation of the earth and the mediation of heaven. The former may be meritorious, and consequently co-redemptive; the second cannot be meritorious or co-redemptive. We always speak of the mediation which we have called moral or ascending (to oppose it to physical or descending mediation).

1. Let us consider first the *mediation of the earth*.

⁴⁰ "The sacraments of the Church hold their virtue especially from the passion of Christ, whose virtue is in some measure applied to us by the reception of the sacraments. Christ, on the cross, poured forth water and blood, relating to baptism and the Eucharist, which are the principal sacraments." III, q. 62, a. 5.

⁴¹ "The sinner stretches out his hand to the saint, gives his hand to the saint, since the saint gives his hand to the sinner. And all together, one by the other, one pulling the other, they go back to Jesus, they make a chain that goes back to Jesus, a chain with indelible fingers. He who is not a Christian is the one who does not give his hand. It does not matter what he does next with this hand. When a man can accomplish the highest action in the world without being soaked with grace, this man is a stoic, he is not a Christian." Charles PÉGUY, *A New Theologian*, Paris, N. R. F., 1936, 205.

The infinite supplication of Christ, although the cross has been erected only at a particular point in space and time, draws to it the whole extent of space and the whole duration of time. It merits in condignity and directly, that is to say, without anything intervening in this line of merit of condignity, all the graces, both those of the human race and those of each individual person. To say that it merits means that it is given by God to *obtain*, to *acquire*, to *buy*, all these graces. These are the very words of Scripture. It speaks of "the Church of God, which he acquired through his own blood" (Acts 20:28); of the man Christ Jesus "who gave himself *as a ransom* for all" (1 Tim 2:6); Christians who have been *redeemed* ... not by perishable things, silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Him who is like a Lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ" (1 Pet 1:18-19). Such is the redemptive supplication of Christ.

It arouses the finite supplication of Christians, who, under the impulse of charity, intercede in their turn for others. Their supplication is meritorious in convenience. In other words, it is given by God to *co-obtain*, to *co-acquire*, to *co-buy* in Christ the salvation of others. Scripture shows us Jesus inviting the disciples to supplicate if they want to drive out demons from others: "This kind [of spirit] can only be driven out by prayer" (Mk 9:29); it shows us St. Paul waiting upon Christ to be delivered from his dejection, but soliciting at the same time of the Corinthians that they would willingly "in his favor, *join their help by prayer*" (2 Cor 1:10-11). Such is the co-redemptive supplication.

In the Virgin it will be first and universal, so that the Virgin merits and acquires in supreme convenience the graces of the rest of the human race. In the other faithful, it will be second, and will know the limits of space and even more of time. If Monica weeps, it is to buy through her tears and her love the conversion of Augustine.

One thing is constant: every intercession inspired by charity here on earth, whether it be Christ, or the Virgin and the saints, is meritorious; and this means that *it is valuable in the order of the acquisition of graces*.

2. It is quite different for the *mediation of heaven*.

The risen Christ, who is "at the right hand of God, intercedes for us" (Rom 5:34; Heb 7:25). His charity has not diminished, *but it has ceased to be meritorious*, to be redemptive.⁴² His intercession consists *in ratifying through an uninterrupted supra-historical act the earthly and historical supplication of the cross, valid for each of the successive moments of our time*: "By a single offering he brought to perfection those who are sanctified" (Heb 10:14).

⁴² "The oblation of the sacrifice was made once for all on the cross, but the goods which it obtains from the elect are eternal." S. THOMAS, III, q. 22, a. 5.

The intercession of the Virgin and of the elect has also ceased to be meritorious, to be co-redemptive. It always proceeds from charity, *but from a charity which no longer has to merit or to acquire*, and whose whole office is to ask that the graces of salvation be given to men *in compensation for the merits of earthly, historical charity*. What is this earthly charity of which heaven retains the merits? It is first and foremost the earthly charity of Christ, the redeemer of all historical ages. It is also the co-redemptive earthly charity. The Church of heaven presents to God the earthly charity of the Virgin, the co-redemptrix of all historical ages. And it presents to God the earthly charity of the Church of time and of its saints, valid especially for the moment of the history of which they are contemporaries. In this light appears the extraordinary value of the charity of the present time.

Here we are, then, in the presence of an ascending or moral mediation, which proceeds from the highest charity, and yet is not meritorious at any of its stages: neither in Christ, nor in the Virgin, nor in the elect. *It does not aim at the acquisition of new graces*; on the contrary, it aims only to promote in our favor the earthly merits of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints. One may speak, if one wishes to designate it, of a *mediation in the distribution of graces*.

3. Here, for the first time, we find the distinction between cooperation or mediation in the acquisition of graces, and cooperation or mediation in the distribution of graces.

But these two mediations oppose one another as the mediation of earth and the mediation of heaven.

In our eyes it is wandering to speak of an intercession which, proceeding from the terrestrial charity of the Virgin, of the Church, of the Christians, would have value, not for the acquisition of graces, but only for their distribution.⁴³

⁴³ To the thesis: "By her compassion the Virgin merits to be the dispensatrix of graces, she does not contribute to their acquisition." M.-J. NICOLAS, O.P., "The Co-Redemption," *Revue Thomiste* 1947, 39, rightly replies: "Such a thesis, which I presume, reveals the insufficiency of the usual terminology. What does it mean to deserve the power of dispensing grace?" To this question, in always keeping strictly to the line of ascending mediation, our answer would be twofold: (1) here, to dispense grace to someone, is to merit grace for someone; (2) in heaven, to dispense grace is not to merit, it is to appeal, at the side of God, to earthly merits.

Mary's cooperation in redemption is studied by Matthias Joseph SCHEEBEN, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*, book V, nn. 1786 ff., Friborg en Brisgau, vol. III, 600 ff. — (1) Scheeben accepts as partially correct the assertion that "what Christ has acquired for us by a merit *de condigno*, Mary has acquired for us at the same time by a merit *de congruo*, that is to say, by way of impetration," n. 1792. Why this apposition? Is not the merit *de condigno* also an impetration? Moreover, Scheeben will distinguish here the acquisition of graces, which he reserves for Christ, and their application, which Mary will fulfill by making us more disposable to receive them. In our view, Augustine's conversion is a total, unique, indissociable ef-

4. Thus the non-meritorious intercession of heaven is based on the meritorious intercession of the earth to raise the whole universe of historical time and, consequently, the whole universe of purgatory. Here we touch in its center the problem of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. Let us speak about a soul of prayer. Treating of the state of spiritual marriage, where God suggests to souls what they must ask, in order to be able to answer them infallibly, Father Rabussier writes: "But how is it that such domination is attached to the prayer of spiritual marriage, when so many millions of saints and angels, who are confirmed in these graces, do not chain the demons and triumph over sinners? Let us recognize here that God does everything in order, that heaven and the Church of the earth are distinct. Just as there is in a single star enough to melt all the ice of the earth, yet we undergo winter; just as to make a lever work, it needs a fulcrum, God wants every action of heaven here below to have a fulcrum on the earth; this point of support is the saints who continue their pilgrimage of this life."⁴⁴

m) The order of descending or physical mediation

1. In the order of descending mediation, the passion of Christ is the instrumental efficient cause of our salvation.⁴⁵ The graces that Jesus merited for us, God does not give them to us except by passing them through his pierced heart, from which flow water and blood, baptism and the Eucharist.⁴⁶

The human nature of Christ, acting as a "joint instrument" or "organ" of the divinity, can use the sacraments and their ministers, which are "separate" or "ex-

fect, due entirely to Christ as redeemer, and to Mary as a co-redemptrix. According to Scheeben, if we interpret him correctly, in the conversion of Augustine it would be necessary to distinguish one thing (grace) due to Christ, and another thing (the disposition) due to Mary. Let us bring to this problem the word of St. Thomas on efficient causes: "non est distinctum quod est ex causa secunda et ex causa prima," I, q. 23, a. 5. – (2) Scheeben asks that we complete the preceding assertion in acknowledging Mary's participation in the sacrifice of Christ, which, without adding "to the objective integrity of the sacrifice of Christ" is required "to the subjective integrity of oblation": it is all mankind that Christ integrates eminently in his sacrifice by integrating Mary, nn. 1795, 1798, 1799. This is the one indubitable truth, which is at the heart of the notion of the compassion and the universal co-redemption of Mary. – (3) Scheeben has reason to blame those who speak of the Virgin-priest. But is it happy when, naming it *ministra*, he translates by: deacon, *Diakonin*? n. 1798. Does not this image risk rejecting the grandeur of hierarchy? The parallel of Abraham immolating Isaac, and of the Virgin, Scheeben's note, n. 1797, is only valid in certain respects: Abraham alone was a priest.

⁴⁴ *Review of Ascetics and Mystics*, July 1927, 289. Quoted by Jacques MARITAIN, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, 729 [O. C., IV, 921].

⁴⁵ S. THOMAS, III, q. 48, a. 6; q. 64, a. 3.

⁴⁶ III, q. 62, s. 5.

trinsic" instruments, a little like the hand, which is conjoined to us, uses a tool, which is external.

2. Must we also look at the Virgin at the foot of the cross as an efficient instrumental cause of the graces which make up the Church? Then, beneath the human nature of Christ, a conjoined instrument of divinity, on the level of separate instruments, we would have hierarchically: first, the Virgin, which would be a privileged separate instrument, a kind of major sacrament of which the efficacy would be universal, and by whom would pass all the graces coming from Christ for men; and then the sacraments of the Church, which are separate and limited instruments destined to lead the various graces of Christ to each particular soul.

Must we, on the contrary, think that the Virgin, wholly hidden in the order of the greatness of holiness, and not having to appear in the order of hierarchical greatness, to which the jurisdictional powers and the sacramental powers belong, does not intervene when we are infused with justification and sanctification except by her ascending and moral mediation?

The question remains open and we are not really trying to decide it. It seems to us, however, that the greatness of holiness alone is required by the mission of the Virgin.⁴⁷

3. The whole life of the Virgin, which is a long co-operation in the work of the sanctification of the world, may be considered according to a distinction which we have already made, under the aspect in which it is *an intercession and a merit*, or under the aspect where it is *a ministry and a service*. In the first case one stands in the line of ascending and moral mediation.

In the second case, we consider the line of downward and physical mediation. Let us leave unresolved, as regards the Virgin, the question of an instrumental efficient causality of grace; its downward mediation is still to be exercised in an infinite number of tasks: she gives birth to the Savior, she protects his childhood, she par-

⁴⁷ R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P., admits that "Mary, like our Lord and in a fashion subordinate to Him, transmits to us the graces that we receive, thanks to an instrumental physical causality"; But he regards this teaching as only probable, and as being "neither denied with certainty nor demonstrated." *The Mother of the Savior*, Lyon, 1941, 243 and 387. In the contrary sense, B.H. MERKELBACH, O.P., does not think that Mary can be considered as the instrumental efficient cause of grace, or even as the cause of a disposition which would require the infusion of grace. *Mariologia*, Paris, 1939, 367. The path to the solution must be sought, we believe, in the answer to two questions. (1) *are the grandeurs of holiness alone demanded by the mission of the Virgin?* It seems to us that yes, and that it is the thought of St. Thomas, see farther on, 763, note 6; (2) *can we regard Virgin as an instrumental physical cause of grace as a separate instrument, a major sacrament, without at the same time conferring on her the grandeurs of hierarchy?* It seems to us that we cannot.

ticipates in the first steps of the Church, she spreads around her the flame of her beneficence and his love.

In the line of descending mediation, Christ as man is the only perfect mediator; his power to communicate grace is a *power of excellence, of principal ministry*.⁴⁸ The Virgin can only mediate in a *dependent and imperfect* manner. If one granted that it physically causes grace, its mediation would be *direct*, but would fall under a subordinate ministerial power.⁴⁹ But in the tasks and activities of which we have just spoken, her mediation is only *dispositive*.

⁴⁸ S. THOMAS, III, q. 64, a. 3 and 4.

⁴⁹ "The priests of the New Testament ... are *ministers of the true Mediator*, when they give to men, in his name, the salutary sacraments." III, q. 26, a. 1, ad 1.

