

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

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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 Czestochowa, 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 Czestochowa”; “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, Coredeptrix 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, Coredeptrix 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 Felício 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 Rotten, 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 Gbennadios Limouris (Orthodox – Constantinople), Fr. Jean Kawak (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 genitæ 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 Accademia 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.